



## DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

**“We’re Doing It in the Park!”  
Park Kids in Vienna:  
A Contribution to the Anthropology of Urban  
Youth**

Verfasserin

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Thanks to all who let me share the park life,  
And to my other friends.

The title of this study comes from the Blackbyrds' song *Rock Creek Park* from the album *City Life*, Fantasy 1975: "We're doing it in the park, we're doing it after dark ...". Donald Byrd (né Donaldson Toussaint L'Ouverture Byrd II), hard bop trumpeter in the 1950s and 1960s, formed the group in Washington D.C. in 1973, from his best students at Howard University. The song has been sampled by many music and rap groups, e.g. by the Rock Steady Crew on their album *30 years to the day*, Noiseland 2007. The Rock Steady Crew from the South Bronx, early break dance pioneers, are well-known from the movie *Wild Style* and the early rap movement, and joined Afrika Bambaata's Zulu Nation in 1982. Breakers are Mr. Freeze, Frosty Freeze, Crazy Legs, and Prince Ken Swift.

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## **A. Introduction**

### **Aim of Study**

This study aims at presenting park youth in Vienna in their world. It presents their peer groups and their connections with the neighborhood and the city (spatial contexts), and with families, school, and at work (social contexts); and it takes into account their position as youth in cities and in the global “urban society”.

Adolescence is a universal human experience; but growing up in urban surroundings entails special conditions. Adolescents must be researched as a distinct group and asked about their specific views, since they have their particular and distinct social structures.

Largely resource-less adolescents use parks in their surroundings to meet other kids, to communicate, and to find support and emotional reinforcement. Parks and public space are important zones of learning for the young.

From my long term activities as a youth worker in Vienna, I know that the park kids are marginalized and threatened by increasing exclusion through economic shifts connected to globalization and international conflicts and crises. Communication channels and bridges to them must be strengthened or newly built, bringing information and support to the kids, but also transporting their views, approaches, and needs to the larger society. Bringing them onto the stage of research, as is done here, is one attempt to bridge this gap and strengthen their position.

Research of the groups in question has been neglected in social and cultural anthropology: there is no comprehensive study of adolescent park

life in Vienna. In general, the study of adolescence, and of adolescents and youth, should be given more space in social and cultural anthropology. Park youths in peculiar represent, in my view, a vulnerable population group whose interests and demands need increased and broader research.

This study centers on adolescents in urban poverty conditions. Thus my ethnography draws on anthropological concepts of urbanism and urbanization which involve, in the post-industrial city, the “emergence of problematic inner-city social voids marked by poverty, unemployment, and rising crime rates” (F. Isin and A. Harrington on Urbanism and Urbanization in the *Encyclopedia on Social Theory* 2006).

Adolescents are lively, dynamic, and hungry for experience. This ethnography contributes to a global view of conditions under which adolescence – as a cognitive-physiological developmental stage which brings about new experience, understanding, and knowledge – takes place today.

I have attempted to present a comprehensive view of the park life and youth worlds of the peer groups in the parks. Youth in parks, and youth in general, are distinct groups with their own experience. Ulf Hannerz remarks in his study of the ghetto, *Soulside*:

“However, I had relatively little direct contact with the teenagers except through their families, largely because they tended to keep very much to themselves and often assembled at hangouts outside the neighborhood. Since this age set prefers not to have adults around too much and is particularly likely to be rather hostile towards curious outsiders, there seemed to be relatively poor prospects for participant observation. ... It may also be noted that since adults tend to be quite concerned with ‘unruly teenagers’, it could have proven difficult to be friendly with both categories.” (Hannerz 2004:209).

This leads to my research questions.



## Research Questions

I had observed for a long time that park kids prefer quite stable groups. This led to my interest in group formation processes. How are these groups formed? What types of groups can be discerned? How do they proceed, change, or develop? What about the girls?

One of my questions has been how the characteristics of park life are connected with a majority society which often excludes but yet surrounds them. Where, and how, do youth groups from parks interact with society at-large?

Many of the park kids share an immigrant background. Groups are often 'ethnically' mixed, and values are shared. Vienna's adolescents might have more in common with each other than with their parents. It can be a problem to research adolescents as members of 'their' ethnic community. So which experiences do they have with life in Vienna, and how do these relate to their families' experiences? How about 'back home'?

Park youths coming of age in cities: What urban experiences do they have, and how is their growing-up related to the city?

The processes of globalization inevitably influence park kids: In what specific ways does this happen? How do economic and other global processes shape their lives, and how are they linked to them?

Researching *given* groups in their settings by long-term fieldwork and participant observation means looking at what people do while hearing what they say. The mutual exchange of knowledge is one side of the ethnographic experience. The other side is the ethnographer's attempt to articulate the studied groups' views inside academia. I also wanted to see how the park kids' ethnography would integrate in anthropology. One

specific interest has been to ascertain the present state of anthropological research on youth and adolescents. Part of my approach has been the use of an eclectic range of literature on youth and youth in cities, as can be seen from the following overview of my study.

### **Overview of the Study**

In the first part of this thesis, after defining puberty, adolescence, youth, and adulthood, I introduce approaches to coming of age in cities.

Influential research approaches from the history of social and cultural anthropology came from the adolescence studies of M. Mead, and the cross-cultural work of A. Schlegel and H. Barry. My research on youth in cities also uses concepts of urban anthropology from James Watson's *Between Two Cultures*, in which the contributing scientists researched both ends of the migration chain, and Aidan Southall's *The City in Time and Space*, a seminal background study on cities.

The literature on Chicago and London has enabled me to situate my Viennese findings on youth as a social phenomenon into a larger picture. Short reviews of the immigration histories of both Chicago and London are presented. The classical ethnographic studies of the Chicago School from the 1920's are relevant both for youth research and urban anthropology. I also was attracted to another metropolis, London, through the works of Paul Gilroy, a former researcher at the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies, Helena Wulff's youth studies, and Gerd Baumann's work, both conducted in the 1980's and 1990's. Two authors who have influenced me through their 1960s ghetto studies are Elliott Liebow (*Tally's Corner*, 1967) and Ulf Hannerz (*Soulside*, 1969). Their studies' full range exceeds the scope of this study, but I draw from some of their findings.

I have also taken into account relevant current research approaches from Viennese scholars.

As a final chapter to Part B, some aspects of Victor Turner's work are made fruitful for the anthropology of youth; his broad approach rounds up the first section, while also introducing Part C, the Ethnography of Park Adolescents in Vienna.

The core ethnographic section of "We're Doing It in the Park" is presented in two parts: the parks as "arena"; and park kids in their spatial and social contexts.

The first part, "The Arena", introduces the parks as ethnographic research areas in the Viennese setting. The concept of an "arena" refers to Victor Turner's use of the term; approaches to parks and places from anthropology are also briefly introduced. Background information on Vienna leads on to a description of the relevant neighborhood parks. Then the adolescents in parks are discussed in their group formations. The last section, on "Bodies", presents ethnographic material on health, body styles, food, drugs, and music. Older adolescents sound off on the increasingly difficult conditions they find themselves in.

In the second part, on "Spatial and Social Contexts", I follow the park kids through their neighborhoods. This also includes park adolescents' use of the internet and TV, and the places they frequent in the common urban areas. I observe their experiences with jobs and at work. Park kids in their families are discussed, as well as the kids' transnational experiences and political attitudes. Park kids at school are considered in the closing ethnographic section.

Finally, the empirical results are summarized and discussed in the contexts of my research questions, of the kids' "growing up in the global urban society", and of the background studies and literature.

My ethnography is based on a vast amount of data collected over many years, enhanced by my longstanding devotion to young people and the great times we shared; my own experiences in marginal youth movements do also flow into my work.

It is the peripheries of urban society where, multivocal metaphors and symbols, new ideas, ideals, and meanings are created; my study here is an attempt to bring young people, their approaches and experiences, and their expressions to broader attention. Misleading distinctions and categorizations are always at work; but we can imagine the whole by leaving them behind.

## **Methodology**

My study is based on long-term participant observation. Additional insights for the present study come from my earlier migration field study (1994). Anthropology however cannot be seen as mere ethnography: "The essence of ethnography is a fusion of and a constant dialogue between field data and theory, each informing the other in equal measure." (Gingrich and Banks 2006:7). Consequently, my theoretical orientations also have structured my data.

It is my assumption and practice that children and adolescents should be studied as distinct groups, not mixed either analytically or methodically. On ethnography with regard to children, see especially Behera/Trawick (2007); Amit-Talai and Wulff have given special attention to anthropological research of children and youth cultures (Amit-Talai/Wulff 1995).

Regarding the study of groups in cities, Roger Sanjek, in the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Social Anthropology*, says of urban anthropology:

Traditions of research that document the micro-terrains of daily life are well established in studies of migration, social networks, streetcorner cliques, neighbourhoods, political processes, traders and entrepreneurs, careers, ... (1996).

As this study entails fragmented and heterogeneous views of many adolescents, it is necessary to keep in mind that, as Peter Gutkind stated (1974:172), methodologically urbanism is “the independent variable”, and the various manifestations of heterogeneity are the “dependent variables”.

### **Fieldwork and Participant Observation**

Vered Amit states that ‘the field’ cannot be seen as entirely separated from the researcher’s daily life, and that “to overdetermine fieldwork practices is ... to undermine the very strength of ethnography” (Amit 2000:17). The following study uses mainly, but not exclusively, data and findings I obtained as a youth worker – i.e. my daily professional life in context with fieldwork. Data also include the results of 159 survey questionnaires (Mayer/Möderndorfer 1998); notes from fieldwork and street-work diaries; and informal talks with hundreds of adolescents between the ages of ten or eleven and twenty-four. A background to this study is the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data (frequency in public space, age, and gender) from the 1997 – 2006 annual reports of *Back on Stage*<sup>1</sup>.

The main body of my ethnographic data comes from informal talks with, and participant observation among kids met in parks. Once a relationship

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<sup>1</sup> *Back on Stage*, in this case in the 5<sup>th</sup> District, is part of the publicly funded Verein Wiener Jugendzentren, 1210 Wien. Reports and publications from them are available at [www.wienerjugendzentren.at](http://www.wienerjugendzentren.at).

had been established, we<sup>2</sup> were invited to join the adolescents at other public meeting places, like clubs. I broadened my view by observations of court trials, in detention units (jails), and in crisis intervention centers.

Furthermore, for years I enjoyed the company of numerous park adolescents at our *Back on Stage 5* office on Strobachgasse, a much favored hang-out for park kids both in groups and on their own. We sat together, chatted and talked, had coffee and cooked, and ate and celebrated together times without number.

Youth work is not performed for the purpose of obtaining scientific knowledge, but for the purposes of general support and immediate crisis intervention, socio-political lobbying, and developing participation options for adolescents. The activities and lobbying which were part of my own work are the *Petition Jugendlich – schuldlos – Papierlos* (Petition for paperless youth, 1998 onwards), the photo project *Frieden und Krieg* (“Peace and War”), which brought together park youth from the 5<sup>th</sup> District with young refugees from Traiskirchen (2004); and the literature collection *Parkgeschichten* (2006), which has 23 texts and poems by park youth originally written on park benches and under trees.

Vienna’s youth work has developed several approaches to the thousands of adolescents who lack resources, both by offering rooms to meet each other and adults, and by approaching youth in public spaces, thus providing a communication bridge in both directions.

As the main body of data come from this kind of supportive work, there are some methodological implications. First, the adolescents were supported as far as possible both in acute crisis and in a general way during data collection: their situation generally improved; in any case, they were not

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<sup>2</sup> “We” in this case refers to me and my team colleagues.

left on their own. The researcher's position is thus implicitly included in the data as well. Second, the obtained data were of a definitely *ethnographic* nature in order to fully understand the adolescents' lives, seeing them as resourceful persons (as opposed to perceiving them as defined by problems and deficits). Third, several youth activities did not take place and/or were not directly observed because the presence of the researcher/youth worker discouraged them.

## Interviews

Further data have come from in-depth interviews with more than fifty adolescents and young adults involved with the drug scenes at Schottenring, the Karlsplatz, the subway station Südtiroler Platz, and Vienna's Stadtpark<sup>3</sup>.

I did detailed interviews in 2003 and 2005 as anthropological data collections on "Young Urban Migrants Between Two Cultures"<sup>4</sup>, and "Health Issues among Marginalized Adolescents"<sup>5</sup>. I had been acquainted with the interviewees for many years, and we enjoyed a relationship of mutual trust that included many shared experiences. - A short field study in the summer of 2009 provided new data on urban youths' internet uses.

Last but not least, we have also broadly discussed my friends' own reminiscences of *their* park times in order to gain insights into their earlier years, and into their years after park life. Our mutual acquaintances have supplied fresh information as well. The generational change in parks has been quite rapid; this is not a stable research field.

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<sup>3</sup> Projektbericht SCHOP, Verein für Sozialprojekte, internal report.

<sup>4</sup> This included several unstructured interviews with 2 boys and 1 adult man.

<sup>5</sup> For this I interviewed 9 adolescents between ages 17 and 20 (questionnaire in Appendix). My work led to a collaboration with medical student Benjamin Schindlauer on adolescents' health (2006-8). Schindlauer conducted interviews with 12 (younger) adolescents in parks. His relevant diploma work was finished in 2008.





## **B. Research of Urban Adolescence**

### **B. Part I Coming of Age in the Global Metropolis**

#### **B.I.1. Growing Up**

##### **B.I.1.1. Puberty and the Expansion of Mind**

*Puberty*, the period of the biological processes which mature a person's ability to procreate, is a universal human experience. The original Latin *pubertas* alludes to the activity of the genital organs. Their development is instigated by increased hormone production, a process connected with the corresponding growth and development of the brain<sup>6</sup>, especially of the *prefrontal cortex* and the *corpus callosum* which connects the left and right brain hemispheres. There is still very little knowledge about these processes, but it seems that a profound brain re-structuring takes place which enhances the ability to understand the world in a more complex manner, what I would call "expansion of the mind". Involved are moral judgement, reflexivity, and a fresh evaluation of the world and its inhabitants. This at least partially explains teenagers' new approach to life which manifests itself in alienation and prompts a period of self-invention and positioning. This includes the questioning of adult behavior and the criticism, and often ridicule, of parents, teachers, police, and other authority figures.

Puberty is the bodily manifestation of the irreversible transformation from child into an adult.

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<sup>6</sup> For recent findings see e.g. *New Scientist* 2365, p 16.

### **B.I.1.2. Adolescence**

*Adolescence* derives from the Latin *adolescere*, which refers to the growing into social adulthood. As evolutionist Stanley Hall put it, “Adolescence is a new birth” (Hall 1904:xiii). Adolescence is a time of adjustment, of settling into the adult world, of beginning to take on the responsibilities of adult life after leaving childhood.

*The Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, in its entry “Adolescence” written by the cross-cultural researchers Alice Schlegel and Herbert Barry III, states:

The developmental stage of social adolescence generally begins at or shortly before the onset of sexual maturity. In most societies adolescence ends with marriage, which is the beginning of social adulthood. In some societies adulthood is deferred and preceded by an additional stage called youth. (1996).

In their *Adolescence. An Anthropological Enquiry* (which will be discussed in more detail below) Schlegel and Barry say:

An anthropological definition of adolescence, in common with psychological and sociological definitions, recognizes adolescence as a social stage intervening between childhood and adulthood in the passage through life. .... Adolescence can be seen as a period of social role learning and restructuring: not simply a period in which early learning is crystallized, but rather one in which unlearning and new learning take place. (Schlegel and Barry 1991:8).

### **B.I.1.3. Youth**

*Youth* is another term referring to non-adults, or not-yet adults. Schlegel and Barry define it as the stage between adolescence and adulthood when “full social adulthood is delayed many years beyond puberty”

(1991:10). They explain: “In most societies, adulthood follows adolescence, but in a minority there is a youth stage before full adulthood is reached” (1991:35). They find this youth stage “to be most common in traditional or modern states”.

Youth sociologist Natalia Wächter observes that the term “youth” got its modern meaning only at the end of the 19th century:

The social group ‘youth’ evolved following the establishment of modern industrial society and in context with the effect of the bourgeois family model. The meaning of ‘youth’ thus depends on the respective society and the historical instant. (Wächter 2006:125; translated by DM).

Youth researchers Lothar Böhnisch and Wolfgang Schröer say that the “transition to 21st century digital capitalism seeks also a new social form *youth*” (2007:173; translated by DM), but this new form is still unknown, a chimera.

#### **B.I.1.4. Experience and the Body as Medium**

In this study, I take adolescence to be a period of new experiences which profoundly change the person’s outlook. Such experiences include those with one’s own and others’ bodies, with peers, and with political and social structures of society at-large. The physiological and cognitive processes brought about by the expansion and restructuring of the brain and mind result in a new view of self and an enhanced responsiveness to the external world.

Experience causes transformations which cannot be known beforehand. Gupta and Ferguson in their discussion on Foucault write, “the subject itself must be conceived as the unstable and often unpredictable outcome of experience” (1997:20). Foucault maintains that an experience - “eine Erfahrung” - must be to a certain degree connected with a collective

practice, with a mode of thinking (Foucault 1996:32). Experience “is neither true nor false” (Foucault 1991:36, cited in Gupta/Ferguson<sup>7</sup>).

Adolescence seems to be such an experience on a collective journey toward an unknown destination. It is a transformation process, and its heterogeneous experience are primary inputs into a changing body-mind-matrix. The transformation process of adolescence is interplay of body, experience, mind-expansion, and emotions, enhanced by communication and exchange with other people. It is a time when human culture is re-created in new forms by the new experiences of self-awareness, consciousness, and the fresh formation of peer groups, friendships, and love.

The body is both the medium by which, as well as the screen upon which, these processes are played. Biological changes and functions are projected into society where they are recognized: one’s growing up is visible to all.

In experiences and feelings, in context and exchange with the environment, the body is the manifestation of a singular, ‘individual’ or inseparable, *Entwurf* (a design), the meeting point of personally lived, yet pre-given, emotions at a certain time and place in history.

Or, as medical anthropologists Scheper-Hughes and Lock say,

We will begin from an assumption of the body as simultaneously a physical and symbolic artefact, as both naturally and culturally produced, and as securely anchored in a particular historical moment. (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1998:208).

Brain development, the mind, consciousness, behavior, and the body must not be viewed separately but thought of as aspects of the same unity.

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<sup>7</sup> They cite from *Remarks on Marx*, 1991:36.

But the body is also transient, in that by sharing emotions and affects with others, it dissolves in joy, ecstasy, or resistance. The intersubjective nature of affect, which is “essentially a pre-personal category, installed ‘before’ the circumscription of identities” (Guattari 1990:66), enables the “affective mode of communication” which can become “a door to a singular yet collective experience” (Kato 2007:5).

The developmental biological and the intertwined emotional and intellectual-cognitive processes of puberty should be taken into account by any anthropological study concerning young people and adolescents.

#### **B.I.1.5. Initiation**

In “classical” ethnology and the cultural anthropology of pre-industrial groups and societies, the *rites de passages* (Van Gennep 1909) connected to puberty usually mark the transition from childhood into adulthood. According to the cross-cultural adolescence researchers Alice Schlegel and Herbert Barry III, the corresponding initiation ceremonies are mainly aimed at strengthening gender identity (see Barry on “Initiation Rites”, *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, 1996).

In modern society, demarcation of age and status is vague and ill-defined. Youth sociologist Cornelia Helfferich (1994) finds the concept of “fragmented initiations” useful. She speaks both of shortened as well as of extended youth, depending on class and gender.

##### **B.I.1.5.1. Fragmented Initiations, Imaginary Solutions: C. Helfferich**

Cornelia Helfferich, a feminist sociologist, sees various strategies (or “imaginary solutions”) which adolescents use to cope with their difficulties in growing up. A “stretched” (extended or prolonged) youth is prevalent among middle class kids in higher education; and a “shortened” youth is

found among working class youth through early identification with work and jobs for boys and early “sexual initiation” for girls. In her ethnographic approach, Helfferich uses the concept of “partial initiations” to discern the various processes which run parallel in adolescence. Her approach is worthwhile to consider with regards to anthropological studies of present-day youth and adolescence.

Helfferich develops her model of “imaginary solutions” from adolescents’ “emic” interpretation of their specific social situation, as well as from the collectively produced symbolic practices with which they express and process this supposed situation (Helfferich 1994:193). Definition and symbolic meaning of behavior are produced as interaction in a specific context, negotiated among adolescents and between adolescents and parents or other adults. These problems of coping are met collectively:

The examples have further shown how adolescents as (sub-) cultural producers put attempts with each other on stage to solve the collective problems, which include the definition, searching for, and testing, of a *sexual* identity. (Helfferich 1994:193f.; translated by DM).

Helfferich argues that the meaning of behavior is produced anew and not along a given norm (p. 196). She speaks of the invention of “self-initiations”, partial initiations, and rites. These include work initiation and sexual initiation and accompanying initiations in body practices.

Behavior patterns of girls and boys are seen as symbolic forms of the collective processing of fears and hopes, which are linked to the collective search for sexual identity and with the processing of sexual experiences in the adolescent world (Helfferich 1994:48). This behavior is embedded in adolescents’ interactions, and an active performance. We do not simply grow *into* something! Young people take over and change the social rules for bodily practices both with their own and other people’s bodies.

Adolescent behavior also can be partialities of initiation rites for reducing collective angst (Helfferich 1994:49).

Helfferich's approach is helpful in looking at young people in present-day circumstances. In particular what helps us are the concepts of fragmentation of status passage, the collective form of processing, and the historically grounded creation of new practices based on both observed and transmitted as well as on collectively elaborated practices.

#### **B.I.1.6. Adulthood and Definition of Adolescence**

In the modern, global and urbanized, society, though the end of childhood is more or less obvious from the physiological changes brought about by puberty, the promised or expected "arrival" at adulthood as the end of adolescence does not happen so easily. Apart from the biological fact of the accomplished personal physical maturity, the attainment of adulthood is rather elusive.

Adulthood is an ambiguous term that requires definition. If understood as comprising "full integration into society" – including integration into the job world and the establishment of a family – both education/work and family foundation tend to be indefinitely postponed or only partially accomplished. On the other hand, sometimes nominally "adult" activities and responsibilities (work, marriage, even childbearing) are incurred earlier, even in childhood. Fragmented experiences are the rule.

What often *does* occur are a denied childhood, a general shortening of the period called "youth", and an indefinitely prolonged social adolescence. Specific markers of "adulthood" are lacking.

The lack of any clear-cut and well-defined start to adulthood appears in the present study in the numerous and variable patterns of life of the park youth. The period of adolescence is therefore here defined as determined by the young people themselves: it starts when they begin consciously distancing themselves from childhood, and extends to the time they speak about themselves as a grown-up. Depending on their personal circumstances, they might spend most of their time in the park *before* feeling adolescent as well as *afterwards*.

## **B.I.2. The Global Urban Society**

### **B.I.2.1. Cities**

More than half of the world's youth experience their adolescence in cities, megacities, metropolises, megalopolises, urban conglomerates, and the "oecumenopolis" (term<sup>8</sup> used by Southall 2000:4), and *all* the world's adolescents are in any case part of the global urbanized society. Thus the anthropology of youth can be combined with urban anthropology and urban studies.

*Urban* is a term for all such settlements since the "urban revolution" roughly 10,000 years ago. The expression was introduced by archaeologist V. Gordon Childe. Ansari and Nas say: "He saw the shift from small scale settlement patterns to large urban sites as a basic change in human history, which he referred to as the 'urban revolution', related to a shift in economic productivity." (Ansari and Nas 1983:2). Aidan Southall states that the city is "the central arena on which the fateful

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<sup>8</sup> Southall explained earlier: "One form of concentration is megalopolis, or ecumenopolis, propounded by Gottman (1961), Doxiadis and Papaioannou (1968) and Toynbee (1970)." (Southall 1983:19).



drama of human wealth and inequality has been played” (Southall 2000:14).

Today’s global society is thoroughly urbanized. “In late capitalist economies the influence of the city penetrates the remotest places to such an extent that they become in a sense urban” (Southall 2000:7). This accounts for the declining interest in defining what a city is (or should be), and for the fact that urban anthropology as a sub-discipline has lost its unique position of doing research in and about cities and complex modern societies.

However, as a theoretical approach, Aidan Southall maintains:

In fact, Marx specified a different relation of the city to the society in each mode of production. It is this changing relation of city and society that I take as justification for the study of the city, and of urban anthropology. (Southall 2000:8)

In his seminal work *The City in Time and Space* (2000), Southall offers deep insights into urban settlements as phenomena of human development. Linking special types of cities to Marx’s model stages of human economic evolution, Southall attempts to categorize cities by their position, effects, and mutual dependency with the dominant modes of production. He lists the Ancient and the Asian City, the Feudal City, and the urbanisation of the countryside - the last being characteristic of capitalism. In the final chapters, Southall analyses urban phenomena of the present-day world, including youth and gangs.

The young urbanites who are the subjects of this study basically belong to the property-less urban population whose livelihood depends on their physical labor. Poverty is not exclusively an urban phenomenon of course, but cannot be neglected, along with density of the environment, activities, communication, and aesthetic sensibility, “all necessarily correlated with

parallel processes of the division of labour, role differentiation and ... increasing inequality" (Southall 2000:4).

Cities can hardly be viewed only as malevolent, the cause of poverty, suffering, and anonymity. It is the duality of urban conglomerates, the ambiguity involved in cities, which "have given expression to the best and the worst extremes of human potentiality" (Southall 2000:4). He states: "Concentration of social relationships in general defines the most fundamental characteristic common to cities in all time and space." (Southall 2000:9).

Because of living jointly in common city structures, people see, meet and greet each other, and observe, copy, and adore one another. A variety of lifestyles is brought about by this concentration of social relationships. Human potentialities are enlivened in a concentrated environment where people can more vigorously transfer, create, and communicate - processes further enhanced by the mass media.

Adolescents as persons with new experiences and outlooks are among those who can contribute their potential to this urban life and to a city's development.

But urban adolescents' lives are also connected with the global processes which are briefly examined in the following chapter.

### **B.I.2.2. Urban Adolescents and Globalization Processes**

Which processes of globalization<sup>9</sup> are especially relevant for young people? For the present study, economic factors seem most interesting, but there are also aesthetic, emotional, and political influences to be taken into account, as well as the worldwide web and global popular culture, especially music.

#### **B.I.2.2.1. Economy and the Global City**

Pierre Bourdieu holds that the economic *habitus*, based on rational action theory, is in no way a general human way of thinking but historically grounded: pre-capitalist economies do not have a set of constituted and independent economic practices (Bourdieu 2000:7f.); these are embedded in society. Globalization, in my view, also means the establishing of this economic *habitus* on a planetary scale.

Some processes in the globalization of the world economy are: a decreasing number of national economies; de-industrialization in wealthy Western countries and the corresponding shift of production “to poor countries defenceless against pollution and labour exploitation”; and “the Japanese option” of automatization and high technology (Southall 2000:412).

Sassen (2001) analysed the *Global City* and the processes connected with it. A major shift has taken place in production because

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<sup>9</sup> The interdependencies between anthropology and globalization (read both ways: a globalizing anthropology and the anthropology of globalization) have been the subject of new and comprehensive works, such as in the forthcoming *Handbuch Globalisierung* (Krefft, Knoll, and Gingrich, eds).

technology has shifted a number of activities that were once part of manufacturing into the domain of services. The transfer of skills from workers to machines ... has a present-day version in the transfer of a variety of activities from the floor shop into computers with their attendant technical and professional personnel. (Sassen 2001:10).

The “global assembly line” evolved from these processes and “creates the need for increased centralization and complexity of management, control, and planning.” (Sassen 2001:10). A “global control capability” (p. 11) needs to be established in administration centers, which are mainly situated in the “global cities” New York, London, and Tokyo.

While Vienna is not one of the global cities from which global control is exercised, its economic production is still part of this globalized economy. The shift away from manufacturing, industry, and local assembly-line production towards post-industrial services-based sectors has had its impact.

Oehme/Beran/Krisch (2007) supply data showing that the adolescents’ transfer into working life is fragmented, dependent on personal networks, experiences, and social skills, and in no way is easy or automatic. This contributes to the other factors which make park youth vulnerable to economic exclusion. Different and partially new skills are needed in these service industries, making it difficult for many no- or low-skilled manual workers to manage this new kind of labor.

Work, if it materializes at all – often only after long-term ‘careers’ as job-seekers – will alter daily life and needs to be somehow or the other integrated. Everything must be newly structured around work: “der Alltag und was er mit sich bringt, seine Gewohnheiten, seine Ordnung und seine Träume” (“everyday life and what it brings, its habits, its order and its dreams”) (Plomb 2001:62). Adolescents develop the strategies of a “*straw in a river*” – that is, soft, or weak, strategies of flexibility.

Plomb cites Pierre Bourdieu who - ever exposing false promises and illusions of equal opportunity - says that the economic and social worlds form a marked-off universe which is full of orders and restrictions, signs of acquisition and exclusion, compulsory meanings, and insurmountable obstacles. This universe is deeply fragmented (“un univers balisé”, Bourdieu 1997:267 in Plomb 2001:68).

The new forms of employment need new skills, and not all of the adolescents muster these. In addition, and perhaps more important: few jobs are permanent or secure for a longer period. It is not possible to “grow into the job” as fragmented job experiences are the rule.

#### **B.I.2.2.2. World Politics**

The adolescent groups which we will meet in this study come of age in surroundings where a variety of processes connected to globalization touch their lives. One influence connected to globalization is a political one: neo-nationalism. Gingrich and Banks:

As a working definition, it thus seems appropriate to specify further the nominalist understanding of neo-nationalism by approaching neo-nationalism as the re-emergence of nationalism under different global and transnational conditions (Gingrich and Banks 2006:2).

We will later see in the ethnography which forms this neo-nationalism takes among park-based kids<sup>10</sup>.

As for global influences on the adolescents’ body images and their physical existence, some considerations concerning present-day trends follow.

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<sup>10</sup> Neo-nationalism in larger Austrian and European society is only implicitly found in my data, and is described and analysed e.g. by Fillitz, T. in Gingrich and Banks (eds), 2006.

### **B.I.2.2.3. Bodies**

Adolescents are target groups of especially aggressive global marketing particularly for tobacco and alcohol products<sup>11</sup>. They are also vulnerable to severe health damage and to accidents, suicides, and homicides (the three major causes of death for adolescents in the USA<sup>12</sup>). Health risks include hazardous jobs, often in the black market and the informal sector; domestic and street jobs; violence; poor nutrition; and traffic, air pollution, dogs, and the generally bad living circumstances associated with urban conglomerates. And drug trafficking makes use of them as quick, independent go-betweens.

Young people are also especially and distinctly targeted by marketing strategies which are directly aimed at influencing and accessing their body images. The body image

refers to the collective and idiosyncratic representations an individual entertains about the body in its relationship to the environment, including internal and external perceptions, memories, affects, cognitions, and actions (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1998:208).

The constantly renewed requirements of mass consumption increasingly aim at a person's body and the way one should look like, perform, and feel, and what input should be taken. The glorification of fitness, bodily strength, beauty, and health, and a "body-fication" of identity take place.

One interpretation of globalization comes from post-colonial theory which sees globalization as "the latest stage of colonization, not only in terms of territorial, economic, and political domination but also in terms of the

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<sup>11</sup> IFSSH – Istanbul August 2005, Declaration on Adolescent Health.

<sup>12</sup> See *The New York Times*, May 7th, 2007.

domination over imagery and aesthetics” (Kato<sup>13</sup> 2007:3). This is a direct influence on young people’s aesthetic concepts. Emotions and feelings are likewise inseparable from the world.

But it has to be kept in mind that body styles are not solely determined by blind consumerism and globally streamlined aesthetics. Styles are creatively produced and express feelings and attitudes. As an example from ethnographic fieldwork, Helena Wulff shows in her study of twenty girls<sup>14</sup> how they had incorporated their anti-racist attitudes into their bodily styles:

My point is that since they have internalized ethnic equality with their femininity through bodily consumption of youth styles and music, it was – like bodily sensations are – a formative experience that will be useful for them in the long run as they go on dealing with multi-cultural England through other microcultures consisting of new friends and boy-friends, their own families of procreation further in time, and people at workplaces. (Wulff 1995:77).

This important hint at the interplay between incorporated experiences and youth styles will be kept in mind as it stresses the self-determination and creativity of young people.

The vast realms of global popular culture, especially music, are of importance for park adolescents in Vienna. Some considerations are coming up here.

#### **B.I.2.2.4. Global Popular Culture**

Music has been the accompaniment for resistance and protest

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<sup>13</sup> Scholar–activist M.T. Kato here refers to Frederic Jameson’s use of the term *colonization* in the context of the penetration of the unconscious (Jameson, F., 1991, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 36).

<sup>14</sup> Her study will also be cited later in this study with regard to Great Britain’s youth.

movements; but it also has given people a sense of self-worth, creativity, transcendence, and affective communication.

Wulff's study points to the importance of youth style and music with their notions of creativity and self-determination, and, as part of a global popular culture, a larger realm of identification. However, economic exclusion may turn youth culture into a merely residual and reactive pseudo-option, as shown in the following ethnographic study from Wulff/Amit-Talai's *Youth Cultures*.

**Example: "The making of a black youth culture", Livio Sansone**

Livio Sansone discusses lower-class young men of Surinamese origin in Amsterdam who are excluded from middle class and mainstream society in post-migration and post-colonial conditions. Prolonged adolescence is due to unemployment in the official labor market. The "adult life" becomes the establishment of oneself in youth cultural styles and pastimes financed by drug-peddling. Sansone's study is long-term, and we meet men in their forties who still adhere to this life style. Their identification with "blackness" and black music (reggae) only superficially masks their exclusion from urban mainstream, while being both integrated and marginalized. Sansone:

This points to the paradox of black culture today. Mainstream urban culture is incorporating many black symbols. ... In the meantime black people are marginal to the centres of production and power. (Sansone 1995:138).

The flip side of globalization is the planet-wide accessibility to music, movies, video games, clips, inexpensive telecommunication, and the innumerable possibilities of interactivity on a world-wide scale<sup>15</sup>. This

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<sup>15</sup> These new structures are the basis for what Matahite Kato (2007) called, referring to Kung Fu and HipHop, a "popular cultural revolution".



includes new forms of groupings, peer life and mingling which evolve through making (virtual) friends around the globe, and options to circulate self-made information.

Adolescence as a time of potentialities, possibilities, transfer and new experiences in the context of a global urban society forms the backdrop against which the Viennese park group adolescents are seen in the present study. But there are important research approaches to be taken into account first.

## **B. Part II Adolescents in Research**

### **B.II.1. Adolescence in the History of Cultural Anthropology**

There are two studies I wish to discuss here: Margaret Mead's field studies in Samoa, and Schlegel/Barry's cross-cultural analysis of pre-industrial adolescence. These seminal works about adolescence and youth in Social and Cultural Anthropology cover pre-industrial societies both from a fieldwork and from an historical perspective.

#### **B.II.1.1. Coming of Age: Margaret Mead**

Margaret Mead, firmly rooted in Cultural Anthropology, combined studies of puberty and adolescence as human universals in a relatively homogenous society with research in and of US American settings.

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When Margaret set out for the South Seas in 1925 to study adolescent girls in a village in Samoa, her own adolescent years were barely over. Sent by her PhD advisor Franz Boas to find information on girls<sup>16</sup>, it was her own idea to go to Polynesia. She worked with more than 60 girls<sup>17</sup>, collecting data on their body, sexuality, group life, and more. She included these findings in a village ethnography which she published in 1928, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, her first volume of the South Seas trilogy. The book was a success, perhaps most importantly among a non-scientific public, people who obviously wanted information about sex in exotic places. Mead published her findings in academic contexts as well.

She found that adolescence held no special stress for the Samoan girls in Ta'u, but that they easily grew into an adulthood characterized by a multiplicity of options for conflict reduction. Mead stated that adolescence was not a difficult period for them because "no one feels very strongly" (Mead 1936:200).

These views can hardly be inferred from the material she presented. For example, she observed that the boys and girls in a household strictly avoided each other (Mead 1936:44), and that the "first attitude which a little girl learns towards boys is one of avoidance and antagonism" (Mead 1928:86). Her charts on girls in the Appendix give little data, and it is not helpful for understanding the girls' experiences in growing up. Mead does

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<sup>16</sup> "He [Boas] decided that the time had come to tackle the set of problems that linked the development of individuals to what was distinctive in the culture in which they were reared. ... Now he wanted me to work on adolescence, on the adolescent girl, to test out, on the one hand, the extent to which the troubles of adolescence, called in German *Sturm und Drang* and *Weltschmerz*, depended upon the attitudes of a particular culture and, on the other hand, the extent to which they were inherent in the adolescent stage of psychobiological development with all its discrepancies, uneven growth, and new impulses." (Mead 1973:126f).

<sup>17</sup> Derek Freeman, in his chapter "Mead's Samoan Fieldwork in Retrospect", maintains that Mead had only about 10 weeks to do her fieldwork with adolescent girls (Freeman 1999:153). See also Freeman's critical study *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr. (1983), and the entry about the "Mead-Freeman Controversy", in the *Encyclopedia on Cultural Anthropology*, 1996.

not explain how the strict avoidance among girls and boys could change into light-hearted adolescent sexual relationships without jealousy and other problems. Moreover, their sexual relationships do not seem to have been so generally accepted given the fact that young people were expected to be in their very own beds – alone - in the morning. Mead instead gives the description of what sounds like a rigid and patriarchal society, stressing the importance of virginity with the institution of the *tautou* (the village virgin), and requiring girls to work and to look after their younger siblings as soon as they can walk themselves.

Mead used her findings to criticize US American social institutions of adolescence and their needless stress. She attributed this to the ambiguities adolescents were given by the dominant culture: “our children are faced with half a dozen standards of morality” (Mead 1936:201). Mead urged that “this child of the future must have an open mind. ... The children must be taught how to think not what to think” (Mead 1936:246).

Mead covered a wide range of topics and gained considerable influence world-wide, and also in the Women’s Liberation Movement in the USA. She did numerous studies of American society, turning the cultural anthropologist’s gaze onto ‘her own’ people. She advocated co-education of boys and girls, self-demand breast-feeding for infants, inclusion of male personnel in education and kindergartens, more involvement of fathers in their offspring’s daily lives, more sexual freedom and opportunities to try out many things with different partners; relaxed divorce laws; and partnership bonding (Mead 1973).

When writing about adolescence, it is hardly possible to do so without taking Mead’s studies into account. Her insisting on adequate surroundings for adolescents where the stress of growing up is reduced, and adolescents are taught “how to think, not what to think”, remain vitally important goals today.

A different position is taken by Schlegel and Barry who, working with cross-cultural samples, provide an ample survey of adolescence in pre-industrial societies.

**B.II.1.2. *Adolescence. An Anthropological Enquiry: Alice Schlegel and Herbert Barry***

Schlegel and Barry collected and used 186 pre-industrial<sup>18</sup> society samples for cross-cultural research of the human universal of adolescence. However, “The cases in this sample represent a world that has vanished” (Schlegel/Barry 1991:199f).

Adolescence is a “social stage in all human societies, intervening between nonreproductive childhood and reproductive adulthood” (Schlegel/Barry 1991:198). The authors say that

social adolescence is a response to sexual development in humans. Social recognition is given to the growth of reproductive capacity as marking the end of childhood and the prelude to adult life. (Schlegel/Barry 1991:207f).

Schlegel/Barry, referring to research in child development, ethology, and primatology, believe the basic reason for the social arrangements connected to adolescence to be “the avoidance of close inbreeding”.

The objective of their cross-cultural study is the search for a “universal or nearly universal stage of social adolescence” and on their central tenets is that there is a “measurable difference ... between the treatment of girls and that of boys, corresponding to a universal distinction between the sexes in social roles and cultural perception” (Schlegel/Barry 1991:12).

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<sup>18</sup> Which means, their book’s cover flap explains, those “outside of the industrial West”.

For adolescence in modernizing societies - those in contact with 'Western' societies - Schlegel/Barry find a common feature that "almost everywhere, adolescents are learning the scientific view of the world" in "an educational system grounded in the humanistic and scientific traditions of the West" (Schlegel/Barry 1991:201). I do not see this as valid, and their assumptions about modern adolescence are rather speculative. What is also lacking in Schlegel/Barry's analysis are data concerning the initiation into a society's main drug(s).

*Adolescence* is a useful and rewarding source in the field of social and cultural anthropology. But it is clear that the cross-cultural analysis of pre-industrial societies does not, apart from a historical point of view, hold many clues for us who do research in current society which lacks remote, 'untouched' groups who perform 'their' rites and ceremonies. Puberty, adolescence and youth in a city like present-day Vienna must be seen in a context where clear demarcations of age are much less observable, or have taken on a completely different and fragmented form.

I will now turn to urban anthropology to see what scholars have found out about coming of age in urban conditions.

## **B.II.2. Youth in Cities**

### **B.II.2.1. Study of Youth in Urban Anthropology**

#### **B.II.2.1.1. Great Britain and Youth "Between Cultures"**

In 1977 James L. Watson published the edited volume *Between Two Cultures. Migrants and Minorities in Britain*. The authors (Nancy Foner, Verity Sayfullah Khan, Roger and Catherine Ballard, Watson himself, and others) present their studies from both ends of the migration chain,

including “the effect of emigration on the migrants’ home societies” (Watson 1979:3).

There are some remarks on adolescents in Watson’s volume, particularly on the adolescents’ anticipations of, and preparations for, adult life. But

especially those who were born in Britain, are caught between the cultural expectations of their parents (the first-generation migrants) and the social demands of the wider society. Young Sikhs and Jamaicans, for instance, often feel that they do not ‘fit’ in either culture (Watson 1979:3).

There are specific differences between the first and the young second generation migrants. On Sikh groups of rural South Asian origin, Roger and Catherine Ballard write, “For the second generation, however, the fact that they are not accepted – symbolised by the continued public categorisation of them as ‘immigrants’ – is crucial.” While their parents had kept “the narrow loyalties of their homelands – based on caste and kinship”, young people “are reacting more militantly to unequal treatment” (Ballard and Ballard 1979:54). This indicates an emerging solidarity among young groups who are discriminated against due to their ‘race’.

Nancy Foner says that the second generation adolescents of Jamaican descent, like their parents, “straddle two worlds”, but “born in Britain, young blacks have had, and will probably continue to have, very different life experiences than their parents” (Foner 1979:144). Foner sees that “[W]hatever their aspirations, in the tightening economic situation they are extremely vulnerable to unemployment”. Being “so bitter and so frustrated by racial prejudice and discrimination in England”, they are also more critical towards racism than their parents (Foner 1979:145).

For Pakistanis in Bradford, Verity Saifullah Khan observes that “[H]owever orthodox a girl’s home life, she is influenced by other ideas at school: mixing with friends who discuss boyfriends, the cinema, and fashions.”

Television also is an influence (Khan 1979:85). Connected to an extended period of adolescence in Britain, “daughters and sons not only explore themselves but the various social worlds in which they participate” (Khan 1979:86). These circumstances are new to parents, and difficult for them to come to terms with.

Watson says of Chinese groups that “the insecurities of work in an alien society could actually reinforce traditional attitudes, causing migrants to identify even more strongly with their lineage than those who had stayed at home” (Watson 1979:206). These are processes connected to re-migration and the idealization of ‘back home’.

I find some relevant results for my research in these studies from the 1970s, such as the deteriorating job situation and the increasing importance of ‘back home’ connections. Young people’s experiences which differ from their immigrant parents’ result in less tolerance of racism and a greater sense of alienation.

Watson’s volume is a direct call for studying youth as a separate group in anthropological research. I will look more closely at Great Britain’s youth later in this study. Now it is important to consider how cities determine the living conditions of young people.

Aidan Southall presents a theoretical-analytical position on cities and urban conglomerates. His approach will help us to understand the human experiences and youth-specific formations in the global metropolis.

#### **B.II.2.1.2. Aspects on Gangs and the City: Aidan Southall**

Southall’s chapter “The transformation of the city” reflects upon such urban scourges as the ghetto, AIDS, prison, homicide, delinquency,

homelessness, and gangs. “Young male groups have been called gangs throughout American history”, says Southall (thus placing the very concept of gangs into a US American context), “always linked to anxieties about violence”. US gang history includes brutal New York “adult gangs up to 1,000 strong”, and “murderous, drug-maddened Black youth gangs of today’s ghetto”, next to which the “youth gangs of the 1930s and 1950s seem tame and almost respectable” (2000:393f). After considering the role of schools - “Bad schools lead to truancy, delinquency, violence, unemployment and drug addiction, knitting together many urban scourges” - he closes with the dry statement that “gangs decrease with employment” (Southall 2000:395).

Southall sees youth gangs, such as the US American variety (which is, via globalization, expanding worldwide) as urban social phenomena linked to cities and metropolises in turbo-capitalist conditions. Gang processes are quite independent of ethnic backgrounds: “Membership is more local than ethnic” (Southall 2000:394), and follow *social* dynamics. Southall sees the *function* of youth gangs as “organizing otherwise lost and abandoned, anomic youth.” (Southall 2000:393).

Southall’s is a predominantly deficiency-oriented explanation for the existence of gangs, which assumes that people have been anomic before joining a gang. I do not see this: in my observations most or all adolescents in park groups (and the few ‘gangs’ which develop from them) have been grouped (in pairs, threes, or larger formations) since early childhood (see also Thrasher). What a gang does is organize *resources* for their members, thus filling in the gap between society at-large and the gang members’ impoverished options.

In conclusion: in urban settings which are determined by the variety of human relationships and people’s concentration, youth groups are the



specific formations of adolescents through which young people explore and experience their city surroundings, and then reflect upon and internalise them, influencing and being influenced by city styles. Under social conditions of poverty and precarity, and gang processes may follow.

I will now approach the study of youth in cities through a picture of Chicago, the “Windy City”, from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will discuss the ethnographic study carried out in this quickly growing industrial metropolis by Frederic Thrasher, scholar of the Sociology Department of the University of Chicago, and Albert Cohen’s further considerations about working-class youth.

First, I will summarize Chicago’s rapid economic and social expansion due to industrialization and immigration. The city in the heart of the United States of America also became home to the then new urban Rhythm and Blues music, parent of most present day ‘urban’ popular music, whether black or white.

## **B.II.2.2. City, Gangs, and the Boys in the Chicago School of Sociology**

### **B.II.2.2.1. Windy City, a Laboratory**

The University of Chicago’s Sociology Department was founded in 1892 by Albion Small and achieved international reputation from 1914 under Robert Park who was a close friend of Booker Taliaferro Washington. Park and Washington took “voluminous research notes on ‘race psychology’ and the condition of southern black farmers” (Yu 2001:38). These experiences doubtless made Park reflect upon his own status as a privileged white male and better appreciate the problems and underprivileged position of the Southern rural and Northern urban blacks, who were denied access to political participation.

At that time Chicago was rapidly growing, attracting workers from rural areas and Irish, Polish, Italian, and other immigrants seeking jobs in the industries and slaughterhouses of the Windy City. Many black people were moving up from the Deep South along the Mississippi, many Blues musicians among them:

The blues were an indigenous creation of black slaves who adapted their African musical heritage to the new, American environment. ... African blacks, torn from their kin, enduring an often fatal journey from their homes in West Africa to the American South, and forced into a brutally servile way of life, still retained continuity with their past through music. (Szatmary 1991:2).

The experiences of the dreadful decades of slavery echoed in the one-, two-, and three-lined repetitive and rhythmic blues songs. “Probably most important, the slaves ... emphasized rhythm over harmony. In a single song, they clapped, danced, and slapped their bodies in several different rhythms” (Szatmary 1991:2).

Blues, after its way up “Ol’ Man River”, turned into Chicago’s electrified Rhythm and Blues, a fully-fledged urban music which addressed the new urbanites’ concerns. They had earlier been more affected by rural scourges:

*Boll weevil, where you been so long?  
Boll weevil, where you been so long?  
You stole my cotton, now you  
Want my Corn*

The boll weevil, a worm that feeds on the cotton ball, also “ravaged the Mississippi Delta cornfields in 1915 and 1916” (Szatmary 1991:3), resulting in a large-scale exodus of black people from the rural South to the cities of the North. From 1910 to 1930, Chicago’s black population swelled from 40,000 to 234,000. “Chicago wasn’t peaches and cream, man”, as pianist Eddy Boyd said; but he and many others had hoped for

less drastic racism and more jobs than in the South. Steel mills and the food-processing industries took on many workers, “needing extra hands because of the wartime draft and a sudden cut-off of European immigration” (Szatmary 1991:3). So the city of Chicago swelled with people from diverse backgrounds.

These circumstances turned the Chicago of the 1920s into one of the most quickly developing cities in the world, featuring a meat industry which used assembly-line slaughtering methods patterned on the Ford car assembly lines (Giedion 1987, Dany 2007). Chicago was “urban” in every way possible, industrializing with all the good and bad consequences connected to that process<sup>19</sup>.

And Sociology, a new science in the USA, found itself amidst a lively urban landscape. Chicago was the perfect laboratory for the new urban social scientists, eager to study the human being and his/her reactions to ever-changing, quickly-developing urban surroundings, who found their way to Robert Park and his approaches and interests

The scientists wished to better the living conditions of the poor and believed that ethnographic research was the best method for finding ways of improving people’s lives. Due to the “commitment of the newly-founded university to the solution of contingent social problems” (Tomasi 1999:1), research should be immediately transformed into social action. “It is the ability of Park ... to question the legitimacy and morality of capitalist imperialism” (Tomasi 1999:5).

Insights were needed from the inside - the ‘emic’ view from the perspective of the urban poor themselves, as undiluted as possible. Thus the research

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<sup>19</sup> Concurrently ran the strange, religion-inspired, phenomenon of Prohibition, which was exploited by various national gangs in Chicago (the most notorious of which was the Sicilian-Italian Mafia).

methods of the Chicago social scientists were as close to the people as possible. The researchers also understood that mere financial help provided to the poor by the city or the state would not be able to reach target groups if they, the researchers, failed to provide an accurate picture of the people and their needs (*Encyclopedia of Social Theory* 2006; Tomasi 1999:1).

It was in this spirit that the Chicago School of Sociology did some of the most spectacular and – in terms of research settings, methods, and scientific and human engagement – most fulfilling works of ethnography. Many of their studies have become classics. Books like *Street Corner Society* by William Foote Whyte and *Outsiders* by Howard Becker have given us major clues into urban and youth anthropology. Robert Park and Robert Burgess co-authored *The City* (nicknamed “the Green Bible”), a reader on urban problems and settings in an industrialized capitalist world. Robert Redfield became a pillar of urban anthropology. Further important scientific approaches were worked out by Irvin Goffman (symbolic interactionism) and Peter Bogardus (scale of social distance).

The Chicago School of Sociology was firmly rooted in the thinking of Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel (Cahnmann 1981; Levine et al. 1981). They shared the sociological view of cities and of the presumably anonymous metropolis as *Gesellschaft*, as opposed to rural *Gemeinschaft*. Robert Redfield and Oscar Lewis discussed urban anthropology along the lines of this dichotomy. However, the Chicago scholars researching adolescents did not think of youth groups as *Gemeinschaft* within the *Gesellschaft* of the big city.

The first study of youth in an industrial city – Chicago itself - was *The Gang* by F. Thrasher, which will be considered here in some detail.

#### **B.II.2.2.2. *The Gang*: Frederic Thrasher**

One cannot help but be impressed by the sheer number (1,313) of gangs observed by Frederic Thrasher and, after many years of research, described in his 1927 book. Thrasher was acutely aware of the great danger that gang members would turn into large numbers of citizens with no sense of involvement in, or loyalty to, US American society as a whole, and “urged keeping channels of communication open between adults and adolescents”, as James F. Short, Jr. states in his *Introduction* to the 1963 edition of *The Gang* (p. xl).

In Thrasher’s view, how do gangs form? Special circumstances are necessary to turn perfectly ‘natural’ forms of friendships, the “spontaneous play-groups ... gangs in embryo” (Thrasher 1963:23), into true gangs. While “preliminary bonds may serve to unite pairs or trios among the boys” (Thrasher 1963:27), the “gang ... is a function of specific conditions, and it does not tend to appear in the absence of these conditions” (Thrasher 1963:35).

Thrasher found one of these conditions to be the lack of understanding the parents, who often came from rural Europe, had for their children’s special circumstances and problems: “Their children on the streets of Chicago come into contact with a motley collection of diverse customs on the one hand and new situations on the other. Hence, they have needs of which their parents never heard.” (Thrasher 1963:179). Thrasher does not tell us whether or not the parents’ inability to understand their children’s needs was an exclusively European immigrant problem, or extended to parents from rural or urban US American backgrounds.

Moreover, the children’s contacts with “the conventionalized American community” were almost always negative, resulting in a sense of alienation from, and hostility toward, it:

Contacts with Americans are usually superficial and disheartening and for the child are limited to certain official contact with school teachers, employers, or police. ... Hence, the children of the foreign born do not come into contact with the best in American life, but, when they escape parental control and follow their own impulses, become Americanized only with reference to our vices. (Thrasher 1963:180f).

Thus the boys were easily seduced by the sense a gang would give of free life without control:

Once a boy has tasted the thrilling street life of the gang, he finds the programs of constructive agencies insipid and unsatisfying. Gradually the gang usurps time usually given to school and work, and, by supplanting home, school, church, and vocation, becomes the primary interest of the boy. (Thrasher 1963:65f).

This is partly a *result* of, and partly the *cause* for, the boys' sense of estrangement from wider society:

Almost everything – history, geography, art, music, and government – that is the common knowledge of the schoolboy of the middle classes, is entirely beyond the ken and experience of the gang boy. He moves only in his own universe and other regions are clothed in nebulous mystery. He is only vaguely aware of them, for they rarely cut his plane. ... He knows little of the outside world except its exteriors. He views it usually as a collection of influences that would suppress him and curtail his activities with laws and police, cells and bars. In one way or the other he is denied effective access to the larger cultural heritages of the dominant social order. (Thrasher 1963:181).

Gangs are “different universes of discourse” which use “little languages” of their own, with jokes, catchwords and songs that preserve the gang’s past experiences (Thrasher 1963:190).

While it is quite logical that boys (girls to a much lesser degree) would prefer the attractions of gang life to the demands of school and a bland, and sometimes harsh, home life, Thrasher points out that the “larger

community of gangland is no better able to provide for the boy than is the immigrant family” (p. 179). He is very clear about what is needed in society and lacking in the gangs, and indeed throughout the nation, namely *intergroup* morality:

The good citizen of today must possess something more than gang morality. He must live in a society where tolerance of other groups, responsibility toward them, and co-operation with them are essential to social order and general prosperity. To this end there is a need for intergroup morality. One of our great shortcomings is undoubtedly just this failure to recognize obligations to other groups. .... So it is that the politician, the grafter, the racist, the religious fanatic, the chauvinist, the imperialist, and so on, are the higher exponents of gang morality: they are all Greeks and the barbarians must suffer. (Thrasher 1963:212f).

Thrasher’s standpoint makes it clear that he sees ‘the gang’ not as a phenomenon of the lower classes, but a defining force in US American society, which must be countered by a humanitarian approach of social solidarity. Thrasher’s general political approach addresses the dominant social groups’ ‘gang mentality’. This kept him from perceiving gangs as part of a ‘culture of poverty’<sup>20</sup>.

There are several themes of special importance in Thrasher’s study which are relevant for my own adolescence study: group structures; the formation of these groups in interstitial areas of the city; the boys’ rapid accommodation to the independent group life; and the dire need to keep the channels of communication open between ‘the boys’ and society at large. Other problems are the boys’ limited knowledge about other population groups in the city, and the gangs’ ‘closed group’ outlook on life.

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<sup>20</sup> See the discussion of concepts in Hannerz’ *Soulside* (2004).

Another study of gangs with important and enlightening insights is Albert Cohen's *Delinquent Boys*. Cohen investigates young male delinquency from an analytical-theoretical perspective. Even though delinquency is not a major aspect of Viennese park youth, Cohen's ideas about the boys' exclusion from main-stream society and their groups' reaction to these structures of exclusion are relevant to my study.

#### **B.II.2.2.3. *Delinquent Boys*: Albert Cohen**

Albert Cohen, sociologist and criminologist trained by R. Merton and T. Parsons in Harvard and Indiana, takes a more theoretical view on gangs. His work is complementary to Thrasher's and thus included here.

Cohen believes delinquent boys form their groups in response to the overwhelming middle class values of US America, which are based upon Protestant ethics (Cohen 1967:87ff)<sup>21</sup>. The working-class boys, who inevitably share many of those values, despaired at ever being able to fulfil these demands in conduct and school. As a response they turned those values upside-down and worked out a *vice versa* way of life and ways of feeling good with being bad. Cohen mentions anti-individualistic property acquisition, anti-rational consumption (p. 28). Most important is the "emphasis on *group autonomy*, or intolerance of restraint except from the informal pressures within the group itself" (Cohen 1967:31).

Cohen, in his concluding chapter "A Delinquent Solution", argues that, for a working-class boy,

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<sup>21</sup> As a remark from hindsight it is perhaps more accurate to speak of "suburban middle-class materialism", the dominant way of life which has been established in the USA from the 1950s onwards via radio, television, movies, and advertisement. Suburban ethics were not religious. I thank Craig Crossen for this information.



The *primary* problem of adjustment is in the area of ego-involved status differences in a status system defined by the norms of respectable middle-class society. The delinquent subculture of the working class boy has the primary functions: first, of establishing a set of status criteria in terms of which the boy can more easily succeed; and second, of enabling him to retaliate against the norms at whose impact his ego has suffered, by defining merit in terms of the opposite of those norms and by sanctioning aggression against them and those who exemplify and apply them. (Cohen 1967:168).

Cohen explains gang formation psychologically, deriving it from the boys' frustration over their inability to meet the demands of the surrounding society. Their group-based solutions (or subcultures<sup>22</sup>) are counter-dependent in that they turn the dominant values into their contraries, but also creative. The most important feature is the emphasis on group life<sup>23</sup>:

We see, for the most part, gangs of boys *doing things together*: sitting on curbs, standing on the corner, going to the movies, playing ball, smashing windows and 'goin' robbin'. ... They are joint activities, deriving their meaning and flavor from the fact of togetherness and governed by a set of common understandings, common sentiments, and common loyalties. (Cohen 1967:178).

Not definitely mentioned by Cohen is the economic saturation which forms the basis of middle class values. Reaching this material saturation requires long-term planning, including the deferred gratification of a prolonged education – not exactly something that economically strained population groups can afford.

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of "subculture" concepts see Gelder, K. (ed) (2005), *The Subcultures Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Routledge.

<sup>23</sup> In his emphasis on the delinquent boys' "joint activities" and "togetherness", Cohen implicitly uses Tönnies' notions of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, which were – together with Simmel's works – key for the Chicago sociologists. Surprisingly, however, neither Thrasher nor Cohen used this distinction in describing and analysing youth groupings in the two works discussed here.

In summary, the main stimuli for gang formation seen by Thrasher and Cohen were: (1) the lack of understanding of their children's urban situation by parents of rural (European) backgrounds; (2) the kids' exclusion from mainstream institutions and their consequent frustration due to their inculcation with their values by educational institutions; and (3) the emphasis on group autonomy and group activities, which tended to result in a parochial outlook.

The complementary studies of Thrasher and Cohen give the background of, and explanations for, adolescent group formation under conditions of exclusion and economic deprivation. These groups, sometimes delinquent, reacted to urban conditions which had denied them participation.

But young people sometimes in their inherent open-mindedness will use their potentialities and creativity to develop new approaches. Rather than perceiving adolescents merely as reacting against things they do not like and growing into something pre-determined, it is important to keep in mind that often they will creatively shape their surroundings.

During Great Britain's post-imperial 1970s, new groups formed around new musical styles. To illustrate adolescents creatively striving for new and better political structures, I will discuss Paul Gilroy, whose account of youth activism explicitly exposes exclusion due to 'race'. Gilroy describes the post-racial stance of politically (re-)acting people, especially young Jamaicans, Punks, and those associated with them. Resistance movements and their impact on society can bring about far-reaching changes, and young people's participation in these is crucial, as Helena Wulff shows. Finally, I will discuss Gerd Baumann's study on Southallians and their interpretation of the terms "culture" and "community".

To begin with, I will briefly review London's and Great Britain's recent immigration history, a topic which we have already touched upon with regard to James Watson's volume.

### **B.II.2.3. Youth in London**

#### **B.II.2.3.1. The *Empire Windrush***

The SS *Empire Windrush* was a huge steamer that brought the first large groups of Jamaicans to the shores of the imperial 'Mother country' in 1948, with many more to follow (Sewell 1998; Phillips and Phillips 1998; Wambu 1999). The people aboard the ship had been recruited in Jamaica by official British agencies to work in the transport and health services in post-War London, which was suffering from severe war damage and a lack of working people. Immediately upon arrival the newcomers were struck by the fact that they saw white Britons doing hard work at the docks – a sight unknown to them<sup>24</sup> in the Caribbean, where whites had merely run the country without doing any of the hard work (Sewell 1998:35; Phillips and Phillips 1999:45). Ashore, the new arrivals dispersed to several London districts, especially Notting Hill (mainly people from Trinidad and Tobago) and Brixton (mainly the Jamaicans), working-class areas where some Britons would rent to "blacks". Brixton Coldharbour Lane, Railton Lane, and Atlantic Road - later dubbed "the Brixton Frontline"<sup>25</sup> - housed many immigrants, and Brixton is still today a predominantly Jamaican black area<sup>26</sup>. Brixton has been, and still is, a

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<sup>24</sup> See also Doris Lessing (1997:53f) in her short autobiographical story "The Roads of London", published in *Granta. The Magazine of New Writing* # 58. London: Granta Publications, pp. 53 - 84.

<sup>25</sup> This name is widely used (see websites in bibliography) and appears e.g. as chapter heading in Rocky Carr's 1998 novel *brixton bwoy*.

<sup>26</sup> This chapter also draws from a short data collection in Jamaica and Brixton 1998-9. I am grateful to Sharon James, Mrs. "Auntie" Winnie Palmer and her relatives both in Jamaica and in Great Britain.

focus of major unrest and skirmishes between the London police and the mostly black population, including many youths. The largest such riots took place from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April in 1981. However, these were not youth but class and race riots.

The 1998 Fiftieth Anniversary<sup>27</sup> of the *Empire Windrush*'s landing prompted the publication of many books, both fiction and documentary. Particularly interesting is O. Wambu's 1999 volume. Black British writers – including Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Hanif Kureishi, and Grace Nichols – came forth to speak about their experiences in England.

Paul Gilroy's<sup>28</sup> study on the politics of 'race' will be considered now with respect to young people's reactions to the conditions surrounding them, and the creative ways in which they take up these challenges: Punk and Reggae, and the far-reaching use of body styles for expressing resistance and utopian-yet-apocalyptic visions.

#### **B.II.2.3.2. *There Ain't No Black...* Paul Gilroy and the Politics of 'Race'**

Gilroy was a scholar with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In his critical introduction to *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*<sup>29</sup>, he writes about Cultural Studies and their "ethnocentric dimensions".

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<sup>27</sup> Comparable to the *Empire Windrush* anniversary celebrations was the exhibition 'Gastarbajteri' at the Wien Museum Karlsplatz, which celebrated 40 years of work migration to Austria. It took place in 2004 and included immigrants' personal experiences, archives, and materials.

<sup>28</sup> Gilroy also provided the encompassing study *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), which is especially interesting in terms of global popular culture and music.

<sup>29</sup> The title refers to a 'National Front' (the extremist British right-wing party) racist parole (Sewell 1998:3). Gilroy writes (2000: pp. 43ff) about Powell's racist attacks and says, "that the new racism's newness can be gauged by its capacity to operate across the broad range of political opinion". Gilroy goes on, analysing Raymond Williams "as a

I have grown gradually more and more weary of having to deal with the effects of striving to analyse culture within neat, homogeneous national units reflecting the 'lived relations' involved; with the invisibility of 'race' within the field and, most importantly, with the forms of nationalism endorsed by a discipline which, in spite of itself, tends towards a morbid celebration of England and Englishness from which blacks are systematically excluded. (Gilroy 2000:12).

In this work, originally published in 1987, Gilroy writes about youth in England with a political-activist turn, and does not discuss them as static groups<sup>30</sup>.

Gilroy paints a detailed and critical picture of post-War Britain from a strong participatory point of view. Striving for a non-racist (or post-racist) Great Britain, he discusses the influence that (British) Jamaicans had on the Punks and on their music, and the Punks' outspoken anti-racist, anti-monarchist position, which was also critical of their own "being white". Their political activism was centered in the *Rock Against Racism* (RAR) movement:

The appearance of RAR coincided precisely with the growth of punk and the two developments were very closely intertwined, with punk supplying an oppositional language through which RAR anti-racism could speak a truly populist politics. (Gilroy 2000:121).

Gilroy describes the Punks' reaction to the Royal Silver Jubilee in 1977, which "brought festivities – street parties, school holidays – and an explosion of monarchist memorabilia which pushed the icons and symbols of a royalist and patriotic definition of Britishness and

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striking example of the way in which the cultural dimensions of the new racism confound the left/right distinction." (Gilroy 2000:49).

<sup>30</sup>In contrast to, for example, his colleague in Cultural Studies, Dick Hebdige (1991 [1979]), whose static view of the Punk movement and semiotic efforts to grasp the 'hidden' or 'opaque' meaning of sub-cultural signs constrain his analytic abilities (*Subculture – The Meaning of Style*).

the British nation to the fore”, thus combining ethnicity, ‘race’ and national consciousness. Gilroy goes on:

The explosion of popular nationalism provided the punks with images of Britishness from which they could disassociate themselves and against which they could define their own, alternative definitions of the nation: past, present, and future. ... The punks’ assault on the central icons of patrician British nationalism, particularly the Queen’s face (transformed by safety pins<sup>31</sup> on the cover of the Sex Pistols’ ‘God Save The Queen’ which was the number one record in Jubilee week), was an important symbolic manifestation ... in their sub-culture. (Gilroy 2000:123).

As to ‘race’, it was necessary for white Punks to transgress the barrier of skin color:

If contact with black culture was to be maintained, then a disavowal of whiteness was called for, not by the blacks themselves but by punk culture’s own political momentum ... these parts of punk were articulating a satirical commentary on the limits of ethnicity and ‘race’, on the very meaninglessness of whiteness which both neo-fascists (explicitly) and popular nationalism (implicitly) alike sought to endow with a mystic and metaphysical significance. (Gilroy 2000:124).

Music was the Punk movement’s most important sphere of creatively dealing with these matters. They integrated reggae rhythms in their work, taking up famous reggae songs and re-interpreting them (Gilroy 2000:125).

Gilroy specifies concrete political actions and interventions while acknowledging the constant self-reflective interaction, communication, and transfer of ideas, work, and values among young people. He provides a description of a self-enacted youth movement, people who incorporated their experiences and commented and acted loudly and conspicuously against racial Britain and for post-raciality.

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<sup>31</sup> The artwork was by Jamie Reid; see Sladen, M. and Yedgar, A. (2007).

Nancy Foner had gotten bits of that in her British-Jamaican study; and we will see in Helena Wulff's work how girls lived this vision in their styles and attitudes.

#### **B.II.2.3.3. Helena Wulff, "Interracial Friendship in South London"**

Wulff's contribution in the 1995 collection *Youth Cultures. A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, which she and V. Amit-Talai co-edited, is a review of her early 1980s fieldwork among girls in South London<sup>32</sup>. Wulff says:

To these girls, ethnic mixture was both attractive and self-evident, something they managed as cultural agents in their everyday lives. ... the habit of multiracial friendship, which is bound to have an increasing political impact in the long run." (Wulff 1995:77).

Wulff's remark of how girls might be "often in the forefront of cultural mixture" (Wulff 1995:64) highlights the girls' insistence on ethnic (racial) equality<sup>33</sup>.

The South London girls' lived experiences of racial equality and inter-racial friendship show a profound and self-established, self-determined resistance against racist practice, politics, and society. Helena Wulff's idea that girls are "cultural agents in their everyday lives" holds a broader meaning: these girls are the forerunners of a post-racial Britain which cannot exclude the immigrant minorities' impact and their relevant share in transforming the former British Empire. Wulff's important contribution to

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<sup>32</sup> Wulff, Helena (1988), *Twenty Girls*. Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology, no. 21, Stockholm: Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University,

<sup>33</sup> perhaps even more so if in the wake of the Brixton riots in 1981, brutally suppressed by a police force gone mad. The Brixton riots are not explicitly mentioned in Wulff's contribution, but surely were a major defining political experience of young (black) people at that time.

youth and adolescence studies brings into focus the political agency of young girls and states how change and progress also come from adolescents' changed outlooks and from *incorporated* experiences: bodily sensations instigated through consumption and expression of youth styles and music.

in his study on Southall population groups, *Contesting Culture*, Gerd Baumann has included both children and adolescents as distinct groups, and seeks for the meanings people give to words "culture" and "community".

#### **B.II.2.3.4. Gerd Baumann: *Contesting Culture***

Gerd Baumann's *Contesting Culture* (1996) is a study of considerable depth and richness of data. The combined data and observations are worked, with an anti-essentializing approach, into a seminal ethnographic study of a metropolitan area.

Baumann examines group formation processes used by the residents of Southall, a suburban borough west of London. In discussing the respondents' uses of the terms "culture", "community" and "ethnicity", Baumann finds two discourses at work, which he calls "demiotic" and "dominant". The latter is

a discourse that has come to dominate the representation, descriptive as well as political, of people singled out as ethnic minorities. This dominant discourse equates ethnic categories with social groups under the name 'community', and it identifies each community with a reified culture. (Baumann 1996:188).



The demiotic discourse, on the other hand, “allows Southallians to create new *communities*<sup>34</sup> as well as to subdivide or fuse existing ones”. The Southallians’ debates of these redefinitions “contest the very meaning or meanings of culture and community” (p. 189). Thus *culture* and *community* are separated in the demiotic discourse, and their meanings reconsidered (p. 195). But the demiotic discourse, Baumann insists,

is not an autonomous opposite, or independent alternative, to the the dominant one. It is used to undermine the dominant one whenever Southallians...judge it useful...Yet it does not make the dominant discourse lose its salience: it would hardly be dominant, after all, if Southallians could ‘switch it off’ altogether. (Baumann 1996:195).

The dominant discourse is instead, for “so-called immigrants and ethnic minorities ... the currency within which they must deal with the political and media establishments on both the national and the local level.” It “represents the hegemonic language within which Southallians must explain themselves and legitimate their claims” (Baumann 1996:192).

These two modes of discourse determine people’s understanding of their social surroundings. But “in certain contexts, Southallians engage the dominant discourse; in others, they deny its essential equation” [between culture and community]. This is an active and conscious shaping of contexts: “Southallians do far more than acting out the dominant discourse” (Baumann 1996:192).

Baumann found Southallian children to share a collective *Kulturbewusstsein* (“cultural consciousness”). This is the “heightened awareness that one’s own life, as well as the lives of all others, are decisively shaped by *culture* as a reified heritage” (Baumann 1996:98).

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<sup>34</sup> All contested terms in Baumann’s book are in italics: *culture*; *community*.

This *Kulturbewusstsein* is in line with Great Britain's then current and dominant discussions of culture as "self-evident" *communities of culture*.

Baumann shows how in the cultural consciousness of Southall children, "their ideas of *culture* and *community* change during their adolescent years" (p. 145). This is brought about mainly by two agents: "*community* interest groups", who "postulate a comprehensive *Black community* that unites Asians with Afro-Caribbeans"; and local Interfaith networks (p 146). So while Southallian children

acquire consciousness of *culture* as a possession before they have acquired functional literacy or a sense of 'who they are in the world', juveniles often discover that in a variety of contexts they perform a *youth culture* of peers, as distinct from the *cultures* of their elders. This can result in an increasingly relativist and dynamic view of their elders' *culture*, conscious of generational as well as contextual differences. (Baumann 1996:146).

Baumann focusses on youth for two chapters, presenting the findings and results from work with "some 350 young Southallians aged twelve to eighteen" (p. 99).

Baumann's work is relevant to my study because he went directly to the children and adolescents themselves and asked about their views. He shows, though not explicitly discussing the processes of adolescence which bring these changed views about, the adolescents' distinct world view regarding central terms in anthropology - culture, community, and ethnicity - as opposed to those of children and adults.

In general, Baumann finds a differentiated use of the terms in question: people choose whether to engage in the demiotic or the dominant discourse. Categories are fickle and fluid; decisions are constantly influenced by experiences, opinions, and events - a political handling of

terms, so to say, which includes both processes of diversification and solidarity within and among immigrant groups.

What Baumann has brought to attention is how the dominant discourse, including legal and political structures, may strongly influence and even determine young urban adolescents' lives. *Kulturbewusstsein* also means awareness of discrimination on the grounds of an ascribed 'cultural belonging'. Being addressed and represented as 'ethnic minorities', as belonging to 'their communities' (as *Ausländer*, *Neo-Österreicher*, *Muslimen*, *Türken*, ...) with their 'differing cultures' will yield reactions to such representations, as the park groups' ethnography will show. Baumann has (1999) also critically analysed "multiculturalism" (see Prato 2009).

But before turning to the ethnography proper of the present study, I will present a short overview of research approaches to the study of adolescents in Vienna.

### **B.II.3. Selected Current Research Approaches**

#### **B.II.3.1. Youth Studies at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna**

There are several social anthropologists in Vienna who have already contributed to the study of youth:

Anna Streissler focussed on youth studies both in her diploma work and in her dissertation. In Bogota and Mexico City she concentrated on middle class youth because she believed that these groups have been neglected in research, scientific interest in Latin American studies being biased towards deprived groups (Streissler 1997, 2003).

Martin Slama worked on internet use and chatting in Indonesia, which also involves mainly middle class youth and students (Slama 2003). The study of internet use and its implications for young people is obviously crucial for understanding youth in modern global structures.

Work on young Viennese with migration backgrounds has been done by Dilek, Strasser, et al. (1999), who have arrived at important conclusions concerning identity-forming processes. Emphasizing group interviews, the authors depart from an anti-essentialistic point of view. Adolescents' affiliation with parks and park groups, however, are not mentioned.

Adelheid Pichler, in her *Girls go guuurrrl* (2000), provides, in the context of analysing notions of girls' cultures, an excellent contribution on female adolescents' biographies, and shows the gender-connected status barriers in the job and labor markets. Her theoretical analysis is based on feminist social and case work.

Susanne Binder is an expert on intercultural education (Fillitz 2002, Binder 2004), and researched interaction in multicultural schools and classrooms, processes of inclusion/exclusion, identity forming, and negotiations in growing up.

How Viennese adolescents are researched in other disciplines will be shown in the following chapter.

### **B.II.3.2. Adolescents in Vienna**

#### **B.II.3.2.1. Sociological Approaches to Viennese Adolescents**

The theories of, and works concerning, the sociology of youth are important for anthropological studies in a globally urbanized world. Examples of this broad approach include the studies of Viennese youth cultures by Natalia Wächter, long-standing youth sociologist with the Österreichisches Institut für Jugendforschung. Wächter, with her study on internet use and chatrooms, has also contributed to the study of adolescents with migration backgrounds (2004).

Richard Krisch, together with the researchers Andreas Oehme and Christina Beran, presents an excellent analysis of the situation and problems working-class adolescents face in today's Vienna, from structural changes in work, to problems of social integration into "adulthood" (2007, with an afterword by Lothar Böhnisch and Wolfgang Schröer). The sociologists observe the increased fragmentation of biographies around the youths' entry into the realm of work (Oehme/Beran/Krisch 2007:57ff). Periods of unemployment and underemployment are interwoven with funded support courses and unwelcomed periods of leisure. These structures persist far into adulthood.

The sad paradox is that, because of the change from industrial capitalism to a “*flexible Arbeitsgesellschaft*” (flexible labor society), there is a waning job market at the very time that jobs and work are most desired by youth. This is impressively confirmed by the authors’ empirical data from interviews with Viennese youth workers and the adolescents who they try to support (see Chapter IV, “Die Problematik des Übergangs aus Sicht der Jugendarbeit und der Jugendlichen”, pp. 99-114).

There are quite a few academic works by sociologists who have worked with similar, as well as with many of the same, groups as myself.

Sonja Gruber (2000) has done sociological research on Turkish Muslim park boys in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. Gruber attempts to explain how the adolescents’ cultural backgrounds influence their attitudes and behavior. She does not, however, compare the boys with other Viennese adolescent groups, who might share similar experiences and behavioral expressions. Gruber also researched girls’ park uses in several studies (1998, 1999, 2002).

Annelies Larcher did her qualitative research on adolescent girls (2007) in the context of women’s studies. She describes how girls, under-represented in parks and football cages, actively shape their leisure time together and often stray out of the district.

#### **B.II.3.2.2. Studies from Other Disciplines**

An extensive and most enlightening study comes from psychologist Gudrun Schuster. She researched intercultural communication in her work with school girls in Vienna’s Brigittenau (1994). Schuster develops her analysis from dyadic interviews and arrives at very accurate results concerning mutual ascriptions, prejudices, demarcations, and opinions

For his medical degree, Benjamin Schindlauer researched park adolescents' attitudes towards health. He concluded that medical access to park-based kids is absolutely essential because of the health risks from their surroundings, their living circumstances, and their own health behavior (Schindlauer 2008).

Other studies have come from social and/or youth workers. Much information can be found in the ethnographic diploma works of the Fachhochschulen für Sozialarbeit (for example Andrea Schmidt on young male adolescents who frequent betting bars and game arcades, 2006), and in the final report studies of training courses on youth work (Aufbaulehrgang Jugendarbeit<sup>35</sup>). These contributions share a precise understanding of young people's lives and are guided by partiality and advocacy.

### **B.III. An Encompassing View: Victor Turner**

Victor Witter Turner's work - although not primarily engaged in youth and adolescence - includes many of the scientific approaches and studies presented in the previous chapters of the present study. His theories, derived from ample fieldwork and his broad-minded interest in various fields, provide an excellent vantage point from which to perceive adolescence, and the kids and groups in question, and to view them and their peripheral position in new and enriching ways.

Influenced crucially both by Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Petermann 1989) and, later, by Arnold van Gennep's *Les rites de passage* (see Schomburg-Scherff in Feest/Kohl), his interest in transitory

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<sup>35</sup> Studied by Geider (2005).

rituals was first developed in his field work with the Ndembu (now: Zambia). In his essay *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage* (1963; published in *The Forest of Symbols*, 1967), Turner presents his concept of *liminality* (Schomburg-Scherff 487) – the middle, separated or ‘declutched’ stage of such rites.

However, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, van Gennep’s (and, consequently, Schlegel/Barry’s) view of the rites de passage connected with the transition from child/youth to adult is not applicable to present-day adolescents. While “self- and fragmented initiations” (see C. Helfferich earlier in this study) do take place among youth, and mostly in a collective way, these do not fulfill the criteria of “a full adolescent initiation ceremony that marks the total social transformation out of childhood” (Schlegel/Barry 1991:35).

It would also be, of course, trivial to state that youth is generally in this “betwixt and between state”. Concerning park youth, though, it is slightly less trivial as the ‘between’ (as we shall see later in this study) may ‘become home’ for some, while others definitely mention the frustrations of this ‘between’ as being excluded from both options.

But Turner elaborated his idea of liminality into a much broader concept which he applied to the most diverse manifestations of human society, and which is connected for him with freedom, new ideas, and creativity.

Turner was with Max Gluckman’s Manchester School until his exodus to the US (Cornell 1963, then University of Chicago 1968 – 77). The scholars of the Manchester School, critical both of colonialism and racism, were strongly interested in social change, processes of conflict, their ritual integration, and field work methods going with them (Schomburger-Scherff in Feest/Kohl).



Turner develops the concept of a “social drama”. This, in its unfolding from conflict to integration, reverberates with Robert Park’s model (based on Simmel) of social adjustment: competition; conflict; accommodation; assimilation (Levine et al. 1981:47f). Diverse population groups integrate through conflict. Turner’s four-phased public action model of social drama in conflict situations (1994:37ff) includes: breach of regular social relations; crisis; redressive action; and, finally, either reintegration or schism.

Leading up to the social drama, there is a “primary process”, Turner maintains in his analysis of Hidalgo’s 1810-11 Mexican revolt (1994).

[The primary process] erupts from the cumulative experience of whole peoples whose deepest material and spiritual needs and wants have for long been denied any legitimate expression by power-holding elites” (1994:110).

I will in the following chapter turn to his ideas of the “political field”. At this point, it is necessary to bring two Turnerian concepts into play which he presents in his *Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors* (1994): *communitas* and *structure*. Turner, referring to Znaniecki’s “community” (where “new cultural ideals and attempts at their realization apart from organized group action” can be embraced) formulates his “*communitas* or social anti-structure” (1994:45). Further taking Zen Buddhism in Suzuki’s reading as a source (1994:46ff), Turner evolves his ideal *communitas* as “anti-structural ... equalitarian, direct, nonrational (though not *irrational*) ... *Communitas* is most evident in ‘liminality’, a concept I extend ... to refer to any condition outside or on the peripheries of everyday life.” (1994:47). *Communitas* and liminality belong to the “anti-structure” (1994:50), while “structure” “is all that holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their actions” (1994:47).

His ideas about the *communitas* – structure<sup>36</sup> dichotomy strikingly remind us of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* – Ferdinand Tönnies' concepts which, together with Simmel's, obviously emanate from Robert Park's flair at the University of Chicago.

Turner compares anti-structure to counter-culture<sup>37</sup> (1994:50), and refers (in *The Ritual Process*) also to Tolstoy, Gandhi, Bob Dylan, the Chicago Vice Lords and the California Hell's Angels (1994:53f). He is also quite clear about his approach:

Structure has been the theoretical point of departure for so many social anthropological studies that it has acquired a positive connotation ... When I speak of anti-structure ... I really mean something positive, a generative center (1994:273).

Victor Turner's encompassing view - where many of the aforementioned approaches to the study of adolescents reappear - also points beyond: his concept of the "arena" will open the ethnography, linking Part I – Research Approaches – and Part II, the Ethnography of Park Kids in Vienna.

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<sup>36</sup> Turner uses the term *societas* instead in *The Ritual Process*.

<sup>37</sup> See also his *Passages Margins*, and *Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas* (1994).

## **C. Ethnography of Park Adolescents in Vienna**

### **C. Part I The Arena**

#### **C.I.1. Public Space and Landscape in Anthropology**

##### **C.I.1.1. Victor Turner's Concept of the Arena**

“Arena” is a term from political anthropology recurrently used by Victor Turner and others (1966). As the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (1996) says of Political Anthropology in its phase from 1954 to 1966, “A new spatial and processual vocabulary began to replace the systems vocabulary: field, context, arena, threshold, phase and movement emerged as keywords.”

For Turner, political fields “are the abstract cultural domains where paradigms are formulated, established, and come into conflict“. These conflicts arise “over exclusion rules“. “Arenas” are the

concrete settings in which paradigms become transformed into metaphors and symbols with reference to which political power is mobilized and in which there is a trial of strength. (1994:17).

Social dramas are played out in these arenas. The fields include various myths and symbols (1994:136); the arena, an actual place of conflict in political fields, is “a scene for the making of a decision” (1994:135). Now arena, while being an actual place – which Turner makes accessible by referring to Mexico City’s bull fight ring (1994:132) –, is also marked by symbolism and style (1994:133). The antagonism may be symbolic or actual.

In this study, the term “arena” is used for the parks as the most important meeting places for the park kid groups. Parks constitute an arena as

contested places, where interactions and decisions define the park youths' experiences, activities, and views. Parks as arenas are actual public places with their contested symbolic meanings.

#### **C.I.1.2. Other Approaches in Anthropology**

Some urban anthropologists have chosen to study urban spaces in particular: Setha Low worked *On the Plaza* in Costa Rica (2000). Kathrin Wildner analysed the Zócalo, the huge place forming Mexico City's center (2003). And Ted Bestor studied the Tokyo Fish Market (2004). Eames/Goody, in their *Introduction to Urban Anthropology* (1977), called parks and other leisure-time areas "units of integration", researched by anthropologists through long-term relationship with people. Parks feature in Martha Wolfenstein's *Childhood in Temporary Culture*, where she compares families in Paris, New York, and Vienna (Eames/Goode 1977:226). Recent work on Viennese parks comes from Sonja Siegert (2009).

An interesting approach was taken by urban anthropologist Robert Rotenberg (1995), who wrote about gardens in Vienna. In his book *Landscape and Power in Vienna* he summarizes the historical development of the Vienna city landscape (1995:23ff). Basing his work on Foucault's idea of *heterotopia* (extraordinary places, absolutely different), Rotenberg finds that people's images and ideas of urban landscape mirror their concept of society: urban landscapes are ideologically-based models of community life.

The neighborhood parks of my study would be then, in Rotenberg's model, residual, marginal urban space which becomes symbolically identified with the park users and their position in Viennese society.

## **C.I.2. Vienna as an Urban Setting**

### **C.I.2.1. The City of Vienna**

The present population profiles of northern and western European countries including Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Austria came into existence because of labor immigration following the Second World War. In terms of the social and economic impact of this immigration, Vienna can be directly compared to such moderate-sized cities and capitals of small and medium-sized post-welfare countries as Norway, and in the European Union as Stockholm, Amsterdam, and Brussels.

Vienna is the venue of this study. It is a historical city, both as a former imperial capital and as an early bastion of the international labor movement. It is the capital of Austria but not a true metropolis. It has grown in concentric circles around the oldest part, the Roman settlement Vindobona. Socio-economic factors divide the urban space into working class and bourgeois areas, but without slums, ghettos, and no-go areas: the city government of Vienna has deliberately attempted to mix population, with social housing in richer areas and more affluent buildings of flats in working-class neighborhoods. There are no outright problem areas; single problem buildings are scattered throughout the city, with a certain degree of concentration of such buildings in the poorer districts.

Vienna is subjected to globalization processes and affected by them in various ways. These processes include migration and refugee movements, the social impact of global marketing strategies, and other processes of socio-economic transformation.

One issue constantly stressed by the right-wing parties<sup>38</sup> concerns the social processes between migrant and non-migrant working-class populations in the cheap housing districts.

First of all, I wish to take transnational linkages into account because they show the important connections between migration-sending and migration-receiving countries.

### **C.I.2.2. Transnational Linkages and Post-Colonialism**

It is important to view European societies in their post-colonial contexts. As Gingrich and Banks explain, the “dethroned” former colonial powers are “in the process of aggressively readjusting themselves to new immigrant generations from the realms of their former colonial subjects.” (Gingrich and Banks 2006:9).

#### **Example: Rada Ivekovic, *French Suburbia 2005*,**

In “French Suburbia 2005: The Return of the Politically Unrecognized”, artist Rada Ivekovic (2008) sees the French suburbia youth uprisings in 2005 as exposing the unresolved colonial past. She describes the suburban rioters as “[v]ery macho boys deprived of any material or language capital, of any material goods or instruments, poor in emotions, gender relations and political knowledge”. (Ivekovic 2008:175). France “still needs to be decolonized”, as the “renegotiation of a new and political project for postcolonial metropolitan France” is still lacking (p. 173). The riots had “much less to do with current immigration than with the colonial past” (p. 178). Most of the rioters, whose parents come from diverse backgrounds, “have been French for one or more generations, so how

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<sup>38</sup> For an anthropological view of right-wing parties in Austria, see the contributions by A. Gingrich and T. Fillitz in Gingrich and Banks (eds), 2006.

much longer will they be considered immigrants?” (2008:175). Additionally, it is interesting to view the riots in Parisian banlieus as constituting an “arena” in Victor Turner’s sense: “for a regime that has lost legitimacy the arena might be the streets of the city” (1994:135). A social drama in such an arena starts with a breach or non-fulfillment of crucial norms (1994:38) – in the case in question, the killing of a boy by the police.

Saskia Sassen (1995) analysed how migration-sending and migration-receiving countries are connected through linkages which are understated in the debate, such as the formation of subjective and objective bridges between the countries (including transnational households and kinship structures). These structures often stem from older colonial patterns: countries usually receive immigrants from their historical zones of influence (Sassen 1995:24). As globalization proceeds, transnationality of economy leads to more linkages and increased migration flows (Sassen 1995:26f).

The “migration-sending” countries are strongly affected by population loss and cannot “catch up in terms of development with those areas that emerge as labor importing areas”. Also, their local economic structures tend to disintegrate under the stress of emigration.

Vienna’s post-War population should be viewed against this backdrop. The new Republic of Austria came into being in 1955, labor immigration started soon after, predominantly with recruited workers<sup>39</sup> from Turkey and Yugoslavia – countries that had had historic relations with the Habsburg Empire through Austria’s imperial connections with the Ottoman Empire, and her engagement in the Balkans.

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<sup>39</sup> On these processes and the role of the unions see especially Eveline Wollner (1996).

Around four-fifths of the park adolescents studied here are from working-class immigrant or refugee backgrounds and have grown up bilingually<sup>40</sup>. They are therefore personally caught up in the transnational and global economic processes about which Gingrich and Banks, Sassen, and Ivekovic speak.

Many of the labor-dependent youth in Vienna are also involved with the immigrant experience of their parents or other relatives, or of friends and acquaintances. This accounts for the shared attitude among city-dwelling youth.

### **C.I.2.3. Urban Experiences of Exclusion, Post-Raciality, and Neo-Nationalism**

Immigrant and refugee experiences and bilingual backgrounds are common among working-class kids in Vienna. This results in a special type of perception about their position within Viennese society at large.

"For example, in institutions, like when I give my visa application, I can see the same actions, these actions tell you: you are a foreigner, you are not with us, you are not from us." (Onur Serdar<sup>41</sup>, Making Of "Der Freund", Interview 2007).

First of all, these kids share experiences of diverse forms of racism connected with language, hair, skin and eye color, name, and other ethnic markers. These often result in experiences of exclusion, harassment, visa and other document problems, unjust treatment (both deliberate and unintentional), increased police surveillance, and a general denial of

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<sup>40</sup> *Jahresbericht Back On Stage 5*, 2006

<sup>41</sup> Serdar is an artist and graphic designer living, studying, and working in Vienna. His observations of social interactions in Vienna a lively source of anthropological information.



human rights. All these forms of discrimination are, whether through their own or friends' experiences, quite well known to the park youth.

In compulsory elementary education, many public schools (Volksschule, Hauptschule, Allgemeine Sonderschule) have a very low proportion of pupils from monolingual German-speaking households. The reverse is true in private schools.

Schools, especially those compulsory public schools with open access, are contested contexts: discussions about society and the city are bound to include schools. A more general discussion on schools is beyond the scope of this study, however relevant the problem of the barriers to education is for children and adolescents of all backgrounds. Suffice it to say that some discussions tend to "blame the victims" - especially the *Kinder mit nichtdeutscher Muttersprache* (children with a non-German mother tongue). They are sometimes held responsible for the bad schools, while actually they are the ones who most suffer from such schools. For that reason, middle class families (with or without immigration backgrounds) increasingly enrol their kids in private schools, many of which are parochial. Those children whose families lack the money, or who, irrelevant of *Muttersprache*, simply do not value higher education, must stay behind in the public schools, where they add to the burdens of the already overloaded teachers.

There is a significant interdependence between district (poorer working-class areas with low rents) and percentage of working-class people with former "alien" citizenship. Since older population segments are still predominantly native Austrian, it follows that proportionally larger groups of the younger generations share a non-Austrian background.

This indicates that most of Vienna's working-class youth grow up in neighborhoods and schools characterized by multilinguality, diversity of

national origin, and, unfortunately, the scourge of poverty. Certain schools, blocks, or parks are in especially difficult circumstances.

Viennese adolescents who have grown up with others from diverse backgrounds differentiate people by categories other than simple ethnic origin. These include categories of “open” and “closed” world-views. Many working-class adolescents of today long for post-racist, non-discriminatory surroundings, while others tend towards concepts of new ethnicity and neo-nationalism (which is seen here, following Gingrich and Banks 2006, as a political view in the context of globalization processes).

#### **C.I.2.4. Vienna through Young People’s Eyes**

As for local views of Vienna, I will focus on images of the city of Vienna as seen through the eyes of working-class park youth. The most important features in this view are the *neighborhoods* and the *common urban areas*.

##### **C.I.2.4.1. Neighborhoods**

The working-class park neighborhoods are roughly delineated by social interactions. Economic structure is based on family enterprises like groceries, bakeries, cheap-shops, local cafés, internet and handy shops, and barbers. These enterprises are the catalysts in the formation of the relationships between families and the park groups because these local shops - including gambling halls and betting shops - are places well known to all.

Situated in these neighborhoods are also the schools, the youth centers, and other social institutions which are important for the park youth.

#### **C.I.2.4.2. Common Urban Areas**

The “neighborhood” contrasts with the “common urban areas” that are especially interesting to young people. Youth from all over Vienna, and from all economic strata and national backgrounds, frequent the high streets and shopping malls, the cheap chain stores selling clothes, shoes, sportswear, multimedia and technology, and the recreational areas like the Donauinsel, Copa Cagrana, and the Prater, and in summer, outdoor swimming pools.

A general trend of urban development is the capitalization of space, marked especially by the proliferation of open-air cafés, of “Schanigärten” (the open-air areas of the more traditional restaurants), of riverside clubbing and partying areas along the Donaukanal, and of shopping malls and shopping high streets.

The whole urban consumer culture is attractive to the young, who are the main target group of advertizing. They are presented with a bright, colorful world of large new shopping facilities and leisure-time entertainment complexes. These urban youth spaces comprising the glitter world of merchandising cater to what can be called ‘young urban capitalist consumerism’. Besides the cafés and other eating and drinking establishments, a key feature of this consumer world are all the shops and enterprises dedicated to the care and adornment of the body: hair dressers and barber shops, manicurists, solariums, fitness studios and workout centers, and jewellery, piercing, and tattoo stores.

These all are places where both sales people and customers are in many ways interrelated. Places of consumption and places of work tend to overlap. Chain restaurants, large department stores, supermarkets, and chain bakeries employ countless young, unskilled workers. Jobs in the low-paying service sector include vendors, guards and security personnel,

ticket sellers, janitors ('maintenance engineers') and sales clerks. Retail personnel tend to be young, and often the atmosphere in an establishment resembles that of a discotheque rather than that of a place of business. Friendship groups sometimes work in the same establishment, which counters the loneliness and anomie which often makes wage labor quite a 'drag'. Kids also often make friends at work. All these work places thus attract numerous young people, friends and foes.

What has come into being is a vast, Vienna-wide youth-affine work and consumer world. The intermingling of workers and customers is a special feature of these realms.

Youth in Vienna consist of diverse groups in 23 districts, with class-based divisions and various occupational and educational backgrounds, and of pre-teens up to near adults. Before looking at the groups who come together in public parks in the working-class neighborhoods, we must first look at urban spaces, landscapes, and parks.

### **C.I.3. Kids in the Park**

#### **C.I.3.1. Neighborhood Parks in Vienna**

Beside the large and beautiful metropolitan parks (Volksgarten, Burggarten, Rathauspark, Stadtpark) around the elegant First District, and vast parks such as Prater and Steinhofgründe, Türkenschanzpark and many more, there are also the so-called *Beserlparks* in the old working-class districts (2, 3, 5, 10, 11, parts of 12, 14 and 15, 16, 17, and 20). These districts are crowded, due to inexpensive old private housing with small and therefore cheap apartments. There is also a large proportion of social housing complexes, some of which – especially those from the inter-war period – are strikingly well-designed and speak of the planners' and architects' dedication to working-class housing.

Urban surroundings and their partitioning are, according to urban geographers/city planners Marcuse/van Kempen, the “spatial translation” of macro-social forces, macro-economic processes, and social dividing lines between population groups (Marcuse/van Kempen 2000:20). These spatial socio-economic divisions are not very strongly expressed in Vienna. The districts I call ‘old working-class’ are neither ghettos nor ethnic enclaves, nor run-down slums. Their inhabitants are people with a variety of lifestyles.

The parks in the lower- and working-class neighborhoods are, although often small and not very attractive, important spaces for people to meet and enjoy the open. Though often almost deserted during mid-day and in winter, on summer evenings a park will be crowded with people from the neighborhood passing their leisure hours outside. These parks are “neighborhood parks” in the sense Jane Jacobs (1993) used the term. Such neighborhood parks are often square, surrounded by streets; but others are hidden, remote. Though all the parks share certain features, each is unique in setting, lay-out, equipment and park furnishings, age, size, and accessibility. A park reflects and depends on the surrounding areas (Jacobs 1993:128).

Parks are not necessarily beautiful, but pragmatic, a sheer necessity in the densely populated poorer districts. The average park is perhaps 200 meters long and 150 meters broad, though there are some considerably larger and many smaller ones. Typically they are equipped with a children’s playground, some benches and tables, litter-bins, and a dog-zone. And of course there are some trees and shrubs. Numerous small paved walks cross each park.

However, I am not studying parks as such, but trying to describe the adolescents who use parks as their major social focus. I draw upon my

long-term relationships, personal participation, observations, sharing of stories and collective experiences with park kids to describe how special aspects of youth – group formation, first experiences, music, body development and practices, processes of maturing and growing up – are lived out in parks and make up the park life.

Parks are by no means unregulated; but they are largely uncontrollable by adults and authorities. Park youths constantly keep an eye out for who is arriving at or leaving the park, being on the watch for best friends, for other members of the group, or for more soccer players. They also keep an eye on the streets and roads around the park.

Parks provide children's and adolescents' groups with space for creative interaction, communication, and transfer in a unique way of life – the Viennese park life.

A central position in park life is held by the fenced-in courts called *Käfige*, the “cages”. Not every park has a cage, and not all cages are soccer cages; but it has been a long-standing tradition for parks in working-class neighborhoods to have a soccer cage. This reflects the predominantly male approach to city planning in general, and park planning in particular, but some efforts have been made to change this (see below). The soccer groups who have played in the cages have been many and varied over the decades; but usually the stronger players replaced the weaker, the older the younger, and the more physical those who played with more sophistication.

#### **C.I.3.1.1. Ball Play Cages**

A cage is a paved area in a Viennese park fenced off from the surroundings.

Fenced-in playgrounds including basketball and soccer cages, of which there are about 500 in Vienna, have been laid out in parks since the 1970s. The most prominent cages are those for soccer, over which various groups sometimes quarrel. Cages with larger space, higher fences, and better all-around lay-outs for soccer attract older and stronger users who tend to exclude younger and weaker groups<sup>42</sup>. Some well-designed cages, including a beach-ball cage, a basketball cage, and a nice soccer cage, are situated within the median of the Margareten-gürtel, but because these cages are used by organized groups, young grown-up males, and even middle-aged men, they are not used by the neighborhood adolescents and therefore not part of this study.

Processes of exclusion, fission, fusion and transformation continuously occur around the cages. Established groups can co-exist, e.g. basketball groups and soccer groups, through not necessarily on entirely friendly terms.

Basketball was introduced to Vienna parks around the beginning of the 1990s, and with it came HipHop<sup>43</sup>, breakdancing, and graffiti. Superstars Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson impressed youth in Vienna, and by the middle of the 1990s the basketball hype had resulted in the installation of baskets in many park cages. Basketball or streetball competitions accompanied by HipHop played by DJs were held in parks. Basketball playing groups made a point of being different from soccer players - more cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and suave. The seemingly less physical nature of the game was expressed in a different world view. Basketball also takes less space. However, the basketball craze seems to have waned among the youth, with the result that soccer has reclaimed its

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<sup>42</sup> See also Blum/Kromer's chapter "'That's My Park!' Occupation of Territory" in *Portraits of Peer Violence in Public Space* (2009), pp. 139f.

<sup>43</sup> For a general history of the reception of HipHop in Vienna see Gächter (2000).

former dominance in the parks. Recently, annual park soccer competitions are arranged.

Cages are the most contested type of public space in the parks. Group processes, and girls' and boys' appropriation of space, will be elaborated upon later. First, the acquisition of park space and the involved power relations will be briefly discussed.

#### **C.I.3.1.2. Contested Spaces of Escape**

Problems connected with parks and cages include complaints from the neighborhood and from bullied, blackmailed, or mugged children and teenagers about groups who lay exclusive claim to certain park areas and cages. Park adolescents do in fact speak of "our park", "our cage". But such unrealistic notions can be – and often have been - very quickly dispelled by political decisions from the city. Several parks around the city have been targeted as sites for underground garages – a major construction project that can severely limit a park use for months. One of the parks designated for such construction was Bacherpark. But then some of the local residents took action:

Bacherpark is being squatted by the anti-garage movement who have had their tents on the prospective building site since January 6th, 2006. The small resistance group has built a press center over the children's sand box, a little hall of wooden poles which they made together with small boys and girls.

The garage foes hold winter parties on Saturdays. The resident park and cage boys soon joined the movement after some initial defensiveness. They understood that it's about their own interests: the park shall stay as it is, not closed down for months to be "beautified". The kids are well aware that they need the park daily, and that, with the park



closed, they could not have met each other as often and would not have found an alternative place to play soccer. Their groups would have become smaller or dispersed entirely, would have been shattered. (Observations, 2006).

The parks and cages are in fact spaces contested not only by the occasional threat like subterranean garage construction, but also by conflicts with security personnel who lock the cages at night fall, by deteriorating park equipment, and by police raids. Jane Jacobs stated that “the belief that uses of low status drive out uses of high status” is not consistent with “how cities behave ... People or uses with more money at their command...can fairly easily supplant those...of less status” (Jacobs 1993:127).

Parks are certainly, as Nigel Thrift and Amin Ash (2002) put it, “spaces of escape”. In their chapter “Escape Attempts”, they ask, “But how might the city become a means of escaping the institutions, especially once power is seen as productive, even performative?” They answer, “cities can provide actual spaces where the workings of such regimes do not reach.” (Ash/Thrift 2002:119). However, they are realistic: “But we need to be careful with the notion of spaces of escape. Most such spaces are only brief respites ... And some of those spaces are either generally dangerous or they are dangerous to particular groups of the population” (Ash/Thrift 2002:123f).

If we think of cages as such spaces of escape, then the “particular groups of the population” for whom those spaces are “dangerous” include girls, and younger or weaker adolescent boys in small groups or on their own. Individual and group violence against others in the parks is, in part at least, a reflection of society at-large. Dominance over, and oppression of, weaker and less powerful groups is played out in parks and cages by those situated at the margins and the bottom of society. Some cages are ultimate retreat zones of young men who cannot go anywhere else, and

often they end up staying there for life. (See the chapter Boys in the Cage, later in this ethnography).

Apart from the bullying, there are many other reasons why adolescents do not go to the parks in their neighborhood. But this study is about those who do, and it is time to see who comes to the parks, what types of groups they form, and how these groups are composed and interact.

### **C.I.3.2. Who's in the Park?**

While all young people need to be with their peers, those who frequent the parks constitute a publicly visible set.

The groups I have been acquainted with were quite distinct and some existed, in changing forms, over a decade or more. These groups ranged in size from two or three persons up to twenty or more, with usually clear and exclusive affiliations: though individual members of different groups often knew each other, few participated in more than one group. Possibilities for interactions outside the group were many – school, the park, shopping and shopping malls, sports, youth centers. Thus the park kids were connected with numerous other groups and persons all over Vienna in changing ways, and this increased with a person's age and mobility.

These adolescents are from diverse, often immigrant, backgrounds and families. The park a kid goes to is usually either the one closest to home, or the one where their peer-group meets. The parks are thus frequented by those who live near it, and have a social peer group already formed. This is especially so for young males, who often establish their park connections while still children.

The parks in the 5th District where most of my participation and observation took place, are: Bacherpark, Einsiedlerpark, Hundsturmpark, Lichtblau-Park, Schütte-Lihotzky Park, Hartmannpark, Hochhauspark, Bruno Kreisky Park, Siebenbrunnenplatz, and numerous smaller grounds (Geheimpark, Bärlipark). Youth work actions and organized events (media, music, politics, sports) for adolescents also took me and my colleagues to parks in the Districts 10, 11, 16, 17, and 2/20. At present stage, adolescents' park life is an overall Viennese feature, to be experienced in parks in the old working class districts, and, increasingly, in the newly built areas across the Danube, and in Vienna's south.

All these parks are meeting places for numerous groups of adolescents, often throughout many years of their youth. We found that around 40 groups comprising approximately 300 adolescents made regular use of parks and cages in the 5<sup>th</sup> District, the largest portion of adolescent park users being boys between 14 and 16 years of age.

The park adolescents' parents are, or were, citizens of Bosnia, Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, Poland, Serbia, Macedonia - FYROM, Romania, Russia (Fed. Chechnia), Afghanistan, Turkey, (Kurdistan), Iraq, Great Britain, Chile, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Morocco and Somalia, as well as Austria itself. They also include Roma groups of various national and religious backgrounds (*Back On Stage 5*, annual report 2006). This present diversity of national backgrounds in the parks is in contrast to the results of our 1997 survey in which we found the 5<sup>th</sup> District's parks to be used mainly by "classical" labor immigrants' offspring from Yugoslavia and Turkey (Mayer/Möderndorfer 1998).

Parks cannot be understood as a mere and more or less accidental collection of migrant or marginalised youth. Not all migrant adolescents frequent the park: many have never gained access to a group; others follow other interests; and still others, not wishing to become involved, stay

at home. And not all adolescents in the parks are economically, socially or, because of immigration background, marginalised. Young people of majority background are there, either in groups, or with groups.

An answer to the question “Who is in the park?” must include a consideration of the proportion of male to female park users. A glance at any neighborhood park in Vienna’s old working-class districts reveals a majority of boys – sometimes in some areas *exclusively* boys. This does not match what is seen in *common* urban public spaces (shopping high streets, subways, local streets), in which the sexes are about evenly distributed; nor what is observed in large metropolitan parks which are also used by adolescents (Stadtpark, Donaupark, Burggarten); nor the demographics in leisure and recreation areas such as Donauinsel, Prater, Steinhofgründe, and Kahlenberg, where families are the primary user groups. The parks we are considering must therefore have special features which encourage boys to use them.

#### **C.I.4. Boys and Girls in the Park**

Girls make up around one-third of the district’s adolescent users of a district’s *public space* – but not necessarily of the parks. The park user structures of girls and boys differ, with girls tending to stay away with growing age, colder weather, and later hours.

Parks are very much used by boys to play soccer, a pastime also connected to future aspirations. Soccer can accommodate many players – the more the better – and is quite an absorbing game. The physical nature of the game, and the averse playing conditions (rough asphalt pavements) are especially demanding. These conditions do not encourage girls to take part in the game.

In addition to being the majority in sheer numbers, some boys are also strikingly open about their generally negative opinions concerning girls in the park. In 1999, during the re-structuring of Einsiedlerpark into a *geschlechtssensiblen Park*, a 13-year-old boy was asked his opinion about park use:

Q: Should girls have space in the park, too? -  
 A: No! - Q: Why not? - A: Because they bother us! (Interview with Al., 1999.)

This interview was made during the period when Einsiedlerpark's soccer cage was being changed into an openly accessible, multi-functional ball area. Many boys, like Al., consider the parks 'their' spheres, and think that girls have neither the right, nor any good reason, to be there.

In the following chapters I will show girls' differing park user structures.

#### **C.I.4.1. Girls in the Park**

Ma. from Eremitpark, which is directly behind her house, is a basketball fanatic and meets her friends in the park to play. Tupac Shakur is her idol, and every time we meet her she wants to know more. - This was when she was twelve. She stopped coming to the park soon after; she is said to have joined a sports club, probably basketball, where she spends her leisure time. She was, when still attending the park, very much interested in the re-structuring of the park, and one of the most engaged in discussions about how it, and the future ball cage, should be.

Ma. is a good example of a girl who found other, obviously better, leisure time facilities when she got older. She did not simply wish to hang around, but was quite focused on her sports activities.

We meet Sh. and her best friend Me. They are 11 years old, and can be found almost daily at the edge of Wolkenkratzer Park where they play. They know a lot about the ongoings in the park, but keep their distance from other user groups. But they also frequent other spaces: one time we meet them on a bench in a smaller district side street; then in the Flusser Park, or the Eremit Park. Both girls are friends from school, doing quite well there. (2006).

Girls often form very strong relationships with one or two female friends. A special feature of girls' relationships is the almost twin-like bonding between two girls. They are almost constantly together, share everything, often wear identical, or each other's, clothes. For them, a dyadic tie with another girl on equal terms seems to be the most important social structure (see also Geisler 1996). If they frequent a park, they are likely to meet with their best friend(s) first, and then go to the park with her (or them). As this implies, the primary relation is not with the park, but with the friend(s).

Girls also drop by the park and meet their friends in a rather casual fashion, taking a diversion while running an errand or on the way home from school (Mayer 1999). Girls shift between parks more often than the boys. They frequent the remoter areas of the parks, especially favoring the children's playgrounds with swings. They tend to sit quietly on the margins of the parks or in the playgrounds, are less active in sports, and are mostly met in small groups of two or three. They want and need to know what's going on, who is there, "wo sind Buben" ("where are boys"), and where the 'action' is. Girls from the 5th District therefore also often go to Mariahifer-, Reinprechtsdorfer-, or Favoritenstrasse. Others use their time outside for long walks through the district and the city, especially to malls, shopping high streets, and the Danube Island (Larcher 2007).

Many girls have their own ways of using public spaces, ways which are not necessarily territorial – that is, centered on one specific park. Park girls

are therefore difficult groups to observe and research: they shift among parks, meet on high streets, in other districts, and spaces in 'common' urban places (malls). They might be easily overlooked if one exclusively researches one park in a neighborhood or does not take the general public spaces of a neighborhood and the district into account. It is also necessary to follow them to the larger urban area.

Girls tend to use the neighborhood parks of their childhood less as they get older. Some older girls come to their new boyfriend's park to hang out with him and his group. This is especially so in "open" groups (see below) which venture out to common urban areas and clubs, and sometimes form large groups of older adolescents.

In general, girls from well-off, middle-class professional families who are strongly encouraged to go on to higher education and the University frequent parks to a much lesser extent. The *Gymnasium* for example imposes a strict schedule, with more classes in the afternoon, a large amount of homework, and often extracurricular activities like music and sports, leaving little time for parks. Moreover, such schools usually have meeting rooms for their students, and therefore these pupils do not depend on parks for a social life. They might also be less interested in the rough park boys.

Girls who take the veil at puberty<sup>44</sup> are almost never seen in parks. Many such girls are occupied with higher education (see above); but others are simply kept at home by their parents.

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<sup>44</sup> The veiled girls are not only from very religious Muslim families: some are from liberal families, but have decided to wear the head-scarf for cultural and political reasons. Some girls who have taken up the veil (occasionally against their families' wishes) have done so as a protest against US Middle Eastern policies. For many Muslims, the wish to affirm and publicly express their Muslim backgrounds was a result of the US's self-proclaimed "war against terror" following 9/11.

For girls who are subjected to suppression, violence, and attacks in the family (by fathers, mothers, brothers, or other relatives), the park and the peer community may become the girl's main resources of support and help, and such a girl can quickly find somewhere to stay for some days and nights. Family quarrels are another reason girls sometimes run away from home. These are older girls who are usually well embedded in their "open" park peer group; their group's open views are often the reason for conflicts at home.

To summarize: The girls who *do* use the parks tend to be younger, not in higher education, and not strictly monitored by their families. But they are less connected with any given park, and not as determined to play despite wet or cold weather. They often stray further, and use other public spaces more often than the park itself. Other, older girls might meet people in a club, and follow a group into their park.

There is a considerable difference among the parks in the proportion of girls present. This is mostly a result of the types of groups which meet there, as will be shown below.

There are tendencies in the appropriation of public space which might too readily be attributed to sex.

#### **C.I.4.2. Girls' "Other Needs"**

It is difficult to decide what the 'actual' inclinations of girls and boys are, and what is formed by education and other influences. Some girls are pushed towards more sedentary lifestyles by obstructive clothing, delicate hairstyles, and long manicured nails. Further disincentives from more outgoing behavior are the repeated warnings about the numerous dangers in public, in parks, and from active play.



The other facts which keep girls from claiming space in those anyway scarce spaces which are set aside for children and adolescents in cities is the rejection girls face when trying to join boys or share areas with them (see above, and also Benard and Schlaffer 1999). Some girls who use curses and stronger language, and can defend themselves (and probably are good at soccer), do manage better to get along with the boys.

Girls - and boys as well - are exposed to dangers in public. While experimenting with their changing roles in developing from children to adults, they are likely to meet with sometimes considerable difficulties. Such processes take place, in the case of the adolescents I am concerned with, in public space with their peers, where they can easily escape any situation which might get out of their hands.

For girls, growing-up often means a double endangering: once as adolescents and once again as women. These dangers are projected onto her physiological structure (her female body with its 'inner', hidden problematic: Helfferich 1994:45f)<sup>45</sup>.

Curbing girls' options for experimenting in public space are discriminatory and repressive child rearing practices. These include girls' (and not boys) early involvement in household tasks, restrictions on their mobility and meeting with friends, control of their physical activities (including playing soccer) as well as their physical appearance (clothes and cosmetics), and, generally speaking, a strong emphasis on "correct behavior" regarding the family's inclinations. This "correct behavior" of course means different things in elite, (upper) middle class, and working-class families, and varies with religious background.

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<sup>45</sup> This implies that girls should be supported to obtain (more) knowledge about their strength, about bodily functions and practices, and about self-defense.

‘Emic’ approaches (asking the girls) might simply result in inculcated conservative and reactionary positions, as many girls have internalized these hegemonic views. While we might too easily blame “their families’ backwardness”, it is almost impossible today to come across any alternative life styles for either women or men in advertising, movies, and other mass media. This is not about making all girls and boys into soccer players, but enhancing their choices, and acknowledging their wishes, needs, and desires without pushing them into a certain behavior based on social conventions.

Accordingly, a feminist approach to park use has been taken up by relevant decision makers, architects, and city planners.

#### **C.I.4.3. More Girls in Parks!**

The debate concerning public spaces for adolescents and the obvious short-changing of girls has been aired in studies since the 1990s<sup>46</sup>. Efforts to provide girls with more outdoor (park) activities and the necessary space for them have been made by the City council of Vienna. Parks with girl users specifically in mind (*geschlechtssensible Parks, Mädchenparks*) have existed for more than a decade now. A special emphasis in this discussion is given to the soccer cages which are the most ardently defended boy-areas. More will be said about soccer cage groups below.

Youth workers have both demanded space for girls, and support girls in their efforts to appropriate space. The park-using girls themselves often seek the support of social and youth workers. Girls, when asked their opinions and ideas, are very outspoken and clear about their demands

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<sup>46</sup> See Benard, C. and Schlaffer, E. See also: *Platz da! Mädchen im öffentlichen Raum*, 2002.

and needs in parks, taking other park user groups' needs into account. But girls tend to avoid confrontation, and tend to simply stay away from places where confrontation is likely. They don't pass by the rude boys who often loiter at park entrances but move on and meet somewhere else. They avoid places where they feel harassed.

Some girls do in fact follow a life style dedicated to "good looks" and try to "behave well". They tend to leave the parks at, or soon after, the onset of puberty. Others, who find to be not welcomed or even physically pushed out by boys in certain parks, move on to other parks or into public spaces. Still others might find a park - especially due to a certain group - to be a good hang-out, and also a retreat from family stress and disputes. These are often older girls who follow a new acquaintance to his or her park.

### **C.I.5. Groups and Group Structures**

"Seht ihr xy noch?" - "Naa, er ist komisch geworden!" ("You still see xy?" - "Nope, he turned strange.")

All adolescents in the public parks and cages of Vienna's lower and working class districts are part of a peer group. As institutions like the family become less important, or less adequate, for the young person, their emotional need for a peer group (*clique* in German) rises. Cliques that lack resources are especially dependent on public space as they cannot afford to meet elsewhere.

#### **C.I.5.1. "Peer Group" and "Network" Concepts**

The term "peer group", introduced in US American youth sociology by C.H. Cooley, describes "informal play- and leisure-time groups of children and adolescents who are roughly of the same age". The peer group is a

*Sozialisationsinstanz* (instance for socialization) and helps young people initiate social separation and orientation processes and cross emotional barriers which were formed in childhood. New social experiences are made in the groups (Hillmann 2007).

Youth sociologist Klaus Hurrelmann states in his *Einführung in die Sozialisationstheorie* that peer groups connect family with the political, economic and cultural realms of society (Hurrelmann 2006:239f), and that the peer group's and the mass media's influence becomes stronger than the family's.

Anthropological approaches to adolescent peer groups are scarce. Schlegel and Barry elaborate, describe, and collect material on them, but do not provide a theory or a concept of peer groups. The function of such groups is, in their view, the hindering of in-breeding, which is in line with the authors' notions of adolescent groups being the workings of exogamy.

Hurrelmann's idea of the function of peer groups – that they connect family and society at-large – is congruent with the concepts of the *network*. Urban anthropologists Eames and Goody discuss networks – together with kinship and domestic units – as primary units in cities (1977). A “network” consists of an “effective” and an “extended” segment. The effective segment comprises “those others with whom there is closeness – as manifested by frequent interaction, trust, intimacy, and affect.” The extended segment of a network “consists of those who are more distantly known.” (Eames/Goody 1977:119). Elizabeth Bott remarks in her 1975 work on urban families and social networks that “[c]onceptually, the network stands between the family and the total social environment” (cited in Eames/Goody 1977:128).

For the analysis of park groups and their special interconnectedness, as well as the connections with people in the wider sphere of the whole city, it

seems fitting to merge both concepts: The “effective” network segment of a park adolescent is their peer group in the park. Their “extended” network segment consists of other kids in the same or in other parks, and the many other people with whom they interact.

However, in my ethnography I will simply use the term “groups”. *Group*, as J. Fuhse says in the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (2006)

“implies a boundedness, connectedness, and homogeneity seldom found on the empirical level. As a consequence, first in Social Anthropology, later in Sociology, the network concept increasingly displaced the group concept.”

This definition of “group” is exactly accurate for the park peer groups I encountered. I use the terms ‘crowd’ and ‘scene’ for the larger context of ‘urban’ adolescents and young adults in Vienna (and, via mass media and virtual reality throughout the world). I wish these terms to imply an interconnectedness without personal relationship: that is, a sharing – or an assumed sharing – of styles and values.

I also want to point to Victor Turner’s concept of “political fields” which are not “ego-centered personal networks”, but “definite, objective fields” (1994:132). These fields are where “conflict arises over exclusion rules” (1994:17). Such exclusion rules are difficult to discover with network concepts.

### **C.I.5.2. Park Groups**

#### **C.I.5.2.1. Group Formation**

Some of the park groups, especially the boys’, form at a very early age, often along kinship ties, by neighborhood, and according to leisure time interests, such as basketball or soccer. Children venture out to the park together, becoming established there over time. Other groups form at the

adolescent stage: young people get to know each other somewhere else, and then meet in the park. Girls might come to their boyfriend's park, for example, as part of his group.

One group consisting of about 15 members and quite stable over the relevant decade (1997-2007) is the Seitstiegen group. We will frequently meet members of the group in the ethnography.

#### The Seitstiegen Group

They form a closely-knit friendship group which can support its members in hard times, of which they all had quite a share. The group developed from a school and neighborhood peer group and comprises brothers Ja. and Mh., and Sa. and Sl., as well as Yu., Su., Ke., Il., and Sk. They met in the park to play basketball, and this turned into a full-fledged friendship whose members meet regularly although many have moved away. The group always included girls, such as the sisters Sa. and Ma., then De. and, occasionally, Ju. - Su.'s step-sister, and two of her friends.

A very strong factor in group formation processes is kinship. Several groups are formed around, or comprise, brothers, sisters, and/or cousins. Such relations tend to give a group a misleadingly "ethnic" appearance: the bonding principle in such cases is family, not nationality, religion, or language. Often an older boy and his younger brother are within separate groups who tend to support each other, but might also be marked by a certain amount of avoidance between them.

Many of the groups are heterogeneous: Bosnian and Macedonian girls and boys; Turkish, Pakistani and Sri Lankan boys with Austrian girls; Roma groups from various ex-Yugoslavian countries with various religious affiliations; Iraqi, Turkish, Kurdish, and Serbian boys. There are a considerable number of "ethnically uniform" groups; but neither 'ethnic' nor

‘religious’ categories are by themselves sufficient to explain group formation, group attitudes, and group structures.

What types of groups can be met in the parks? I distinguish groups first as “tourists” and “residents” according to how they use their park. Then I distinguish the “resident” groups by whether their general attitude is “open” or “closed”.

I formulate my views of the indicated group models, which I found relevant to understanding. I distilled my group models from long-term observations, and found these descriptive terms to be adequate<sup>47</sup>.

#### **C.I.5.2.2. Group Models**

##### **“Residents” and “Tourists”**

It is necessary to distinguish between park “residents” and park “tourists”. The latter are merely after-school recreational park users. They come in larger groups, or even alone, to the park closest to school, during noon breaks or in the early afternoon. They play ball, or relax on benches or the lawn. They disperse after some time.

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<sup>47</sup> I speak of group types, Ulf Hannerz speaks of life-styles: “However, there is another important kind of differentiation which we may refer to as a diversity of life styles. ‘Life style’ is admittedly a vague term; this may be one of its advantages ... we may view a life style as the involvement of an individual with a particular set of modes of action, social relationships, and contexts. The diversity of life styles has a great impact on the ordering of ghetto social relations. People of different life styles have different kinds of networks, and the difference influences the quantity and quality of interaction between them.” (Hannerz 2004:34). He mentions further methodological implications which also apply to my “open” and “closed” group models: “It should also be pointed out that the designations for life styles used here are not native ghetto terms ... However, they seem to be reasonably informative capsule characterizations of the respective life styles”. (Hannerz 2004:38).

These “tourists” quit park use with the end of their schooling at the latest, and are not this ethnography’s subjects. Some of these tourists may turn into residents in special circumstances. This depends on their ability to make contacts in the parks, and on their wish to do so – which is not very often the case.

The “resident” groups are regular park users. They are there several times a week or daily and for longer times (sometimes all day). Residents almost always meet in “their” park also if planning to go somewhere else, and may be present at any one park for many years. “Cage groups” are always residents.

Resident groups are in my model the park kids proper; these can be either in “open” or “closed” groups.

### **“Open” and “Closed” Groups**

I have come to think of park groups along of a continuum from “open” to “closed”. These models reflect my view of the groups’ *general* attitudes. The group models are fluid; they depend on their members’ attitudes, approaches, experiences, and influences, which may quickly change.

My image of groups as either “open” or “closed” is also connected to their ability to ‘move’.

Ideal *open* groups have ‘air’ or ‘space’ between their members. They float easily, in the parks, in the neighborhood, and through Vienna, integrating others, interacting freely, and bringing together a variety of views (boys and girls, languages, religions, nationalities, political views, economic backgrounds, sexuality). This flexible attitude helps them to understand, to assess, and to cope with new experiences.



Ideal *closed* groups' members form a rigid circle with their members predominantly interacting with each other. The group, when trying to move, meets resistance. Closed groups tend to share secrets and try to evade outside influences; some tend to sectarianism. Experiences, often of repression and violence, must be dealt with within this closed system, often drawing on perceived ethnicity, nationalism, and religion. Thus, closed groups tend to stay local, remaining in their neighborhood where they were formed, which often was at a very early age. "Closed" groups can be either all-male or all-female<sup>48</sup>.

"Open" groups tend to have a more "permeable" world-view, while the "closed" – "impermeable" - groups think and act along the lines of ethnic, national, and religious prejudices. Open groups welcome those who share the open view, and exclude or tend to exclude others who seem "closed". "Closed" groups exclude, or tend to exclude, others on the basis of language, religion or gender, but are quick to accept those who share their attributes.

The more mixed a group, the more "open" it is, while the most 'uniform' groups tend to be "closed". I consider sexually mixed groups as "open" because their members must of necessity accept the presence of the other sex, and interact with them.

One example is the Katzenpark group, which contains up to 20 members. One of them is Id.:

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<sup>48</sup> The first all-male groups I noticed were HipHoppers in the beginnings of the 1990s. The graffiti group who produced the *burning walls* in the 5<sup>th</sup> District Einsiedlerpark ("HipHop Grows - Work in Progress", October 1997; the walls are still on display) originally consisted of 5 young men. Two others, who they already knew, later joined them and painted an additional wall. The model of an all-male, closed group is in no way exclusive to cages, but seems to have formed in several youth-cultural realms (skaters; graffiti; HipHoppers; breakdancers; and so on). This is of course also the predominant type of group in society's top layers.

Id. is more or less living in the park, and would constantly be there, were he not doing military service. But from there, he returns in the evening to the park almost immediately. He enjoys the large community he is living in, with its numerous gatherings, parties, wedding receptions, and musical events. The Macedonian Roma from the town Pr., his community, total about 2000 people in Vienna. He has a girl friend, they go to clubs and discos, and to the park, together. He is 20 and "normal", as he says of himself. In his group are Ka. and his sister Sd., then Se., Er., and Ka.'s cousin. Loosely connected are also Bosnian girl El., Sa. - a girl with Austrian parents, and Sr., a girl from Turkish background who goes to the gymnasium.

Sexually mixed groups provide the best opportunities for experience, experiment, and adventure. This does not mean that boy-girl groups are necessarily non-patriarchal: I have seen boys send their girlfriend home to change into less frivolous clothes, and brothers decide whether or not their (older) sister may come with them to the discotheque.

The parks are spatial realms where both approaches come into intimate contact in the group members' daily interactions. Both open and closed groups know the others and their attitudes quite well ("wir kennen die eh", "die sind arm", "die sind so wie wir", "ich kenne seinen Vater" – "we know them, anyhow, they are poor", "they are like we are", "I know his father").

Now I will describe some special park groups (cage groups, girl groups, incipient gangs), and then discuss group fission, group fusion, and larger group formation.

### **C.I.5.3. Special Groups**

#### **C.I.5.3.1. Cage Groups**

Cage groups – those based in a park's ball play cage – can be categorized as either open or closed. Sf.'s Weichmannpark cage group is one example for a cage group which I consider "closed":

Sf. is 17, turning 18 soon, but younger looking – small, high-pitched voice. He spends most of his time in the park with his peers; he is crazy about football. He might be slightly inclined to verbal abuse and physical violence and easily loses his patience. His peers share a neo-national world view. He is rarely alone, usually with his peers, the Weichmannpark cage group. He gets up around noon, and then meets his friends; they go to the cage to play soccer; but not always; what they do? Sit in the park. Sf. finds his life basically ok ("mein Leben is eh gut"). It is very hard for him to find a job. His German is not especially good, but he takes his mother to the doctor if she needs to go, and translates for her; he also picks up his little sister from kindergarten, he favors her very much. However, the Weichmann park cage is the best cage of the district, with a special soft floor. The fact that a hospital is close by diminishes the playing options in the evening. (Interview 2005).

These fenced-in soccer cages are spaces which often serve as zones of retreat for boys and young men. They are defended against outsiders; the in-group, those in charge, those who managed to be the cage-gang, sees to it that nobody enters. There are certain times when the smaller boy groups can play, and times when no-one is using the cage. But as soon as the main groups arrive, the others give them their space. Users of the park, and cage users who often have been living in the neighborhood for many years, know each other well.

The groups in the cages differ in their composition. A cage in one park may have a dominant, closed cage group, but the cage in the next park might host a large number of diverse groups, all playing together. Whether groups are closed or open depends on adolescents' personal attitudes and the peer group formation processes in the neighborhood.

The Seitstiegen group is a cage- and park-based "open" group. There is no notion of excluding the girls from the cage; the cage is fitted for playing soccer and basketball as well. However, it would be the boys who engage more often and sometimes exclusively in ball games, mainly if the girls are absent.

Not all cages are suited for playing football; some have been designed for basketball. These basketball groups usually differ in attitude from soccer groups – they maintain a more cosmopolitan life style.

"Closed" groups in soccer cages are all-male, and often uniform concerning their political world view. Soccer skills, physical strength and also social skills are required to advance in the groups. Two soccer teams form quickly, and the cage group organizes well around the game. Younger boys, especially brothers, are often allowed to play with the elder adolescents. The skills of the young are commented upon, and if one of them shows a special move, it enhances his standing among his peers. Often these younger brothers will be the next cage groups after their elder brothers have moved on.

Cage members stick together and, if planning to go somewhere else, meet in the cage as well. Such groups, counting the younger boys, average around 20 members. Especially clever and talented boys below 10 years of age can be part of the group.

Many of the boys have role models who play in league clubs and come from the parks. Therefore they aspire to become professional soccer

players. This desire increases the importance of the soccer cage to them as they *need* to practice. Some indeed start playing in a *Verein*, which obliges them to lead a more regulated life. The cages might lose importance to them, although they still come and play with their former peers. In fact, cage group members' soccer skills can be quite remarkable.

Within the larger group - the cage group itself - are smaller, friendship-based sub-groups who spend more time together and share their secrets - about relationships with girls and stress with parents, especially with fathers and older brothers. Boys' friendships are very strong and may form very early, sometimes at just 4 or 5 years of age, and some of these friendships are for life.

The boys in the cage groups are generally aware of the others' life circumstances. They support each other against the "outside world", which they encounter through such institutions as school, the police, and social welfare, and against fathers, families, and relatives who might hassle them.

"The cage" is a very strong identity formation site. Consequently, it is very hard to "leave the cage". Members of closed cage groups are the most deprived, in terms of financial resources and access to mainstream society. They strike back against the repressions they experience by defending 'their' cage against intruders. They cannot go anywhere else, so at least nobody else may enter their cage. Many cage groups share a neo-nationalist political view connected to their homeland (whichever it may be).

Cage groups – soccer and basketball groups – can be open or closed. The next example from the Flusser park shows how an open group was challenged by a closed group who wanted access to the soccer cage. The

subsequent violence got quickly out of hand, and at least one severe injury followed:

There were two groups in the Flusser park cages: one older, all-male and open, ethnically mixed group who played soccer, but also liked using the basketball cage right next to it; and a younger, closed group who were solely interested in soccer. Both got on well with each other: the older boys enjoyed the youngsters' respect, and also influenced them in discussions. They all were then challenged by a closed boy group of young refugees who had recently moved into the district, were in search of space to play soccer, and pursued this in a quite violent way. This led to several big fights and considerable anxiety among the two resident cage groups who were quick to ask for police support. The older mixed group does not attend the cage any more – one of them got hurt badly, and since this group has not been a violent one, they were shocked and confused. In due course of time, however, some boys from the (former) closed refugee group occasionally came to the cage to play with the younger Flusser park cage group. Others from the refugee group moved on as a closed group, straying further in search of opportunities.

This example illustrates cages as a contested space resulting from a deprived group's search of somewhere to play soccer. Some boys of the newcomers were eventually integrated, thus forming a new, open group, but others were not.

For some, the cage group stays the main friendship unit into the members' adult years, as the following example shows:

One all-male group, formerly park-based but now in their late twenties, still gather around one man. He is economically the most successful, owning several clothing production facilities and retail outlets and is still unmarried, but has his own apartment. The others are either

precariously employed or unemployed, and come to his home to play computer and card games, and to smoke. The host cheats at the games: the others know, but don't address this. They would not have any other place to meet – some are married, some still live with their parents, money is scarce. The group is based on dependency, and these structures have petrified over the years from the times when they started out as a closed neighborhood park and cage group.

Another example of adult men who still go to the park can be seen in the short film 'Der Freund' by Vienna-born filmmaker Muzaffer Hasaltay which shows two young men meeting at the cage in the park years after they have moved on into different lives. Their "old cage days" evoke for both the togetherness and unity formerly enjoyed. The conflict that develops between the two men, Osman ('Osi') and Murat, illustrates the consequences of violence, and how it destroys friendship<sup>49</sup>.

The phenomenon of closed cage groups is a dependent variable. In this model, groups from the most deprived population segments tend to form closed cage groups. There have been, in Vienna's cages, closed soccer groups from a variety of backgrounds<sup>50</sup>. All of them share the attributes generally associated with poor urban population groups.

Members of closed soccer cage groups are more likely than others to react violently. The vicious circle of exclusion starts at early age. The group, often established at an early age as well, becomes ever more important as a place for shared experiences. Group-based violence seems a satisfying response to stupid teachers, prejudiced police, racist club

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<sup>49</sup> One feature I cannot follow up in the present study is the position that Bruce Lee and Martial Arts hold in young men's lives. It is, however, a very prominent feature in Hasaltay's film.

<sup>50</sup> At present many closed soccer cage groups in the relevant districts speak predominantly Turkish, and are from Anatolian backgrounds.

bouncers, and so on. Fighting, to be able to fight, to be strong, to be mean, holds promises: and thus the essentializing and culturalizing stigmata are likely to turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy through experiences of rejection, exclusion, and violence. But however “monolingual” such groups might seem, often boys from different backgrounds are included.

A recent tendency among cage groups needs further attention:

Cs. told me that nobody went to the cage in their 3<sup>rd</sup> District park any more. – Where are people, the friends and peers? – In the betting café. They do not meet in the park and cage any more, nobody *plays* soccer now, they only *bet* on the games. – But, doesn't it cost a lot to be there? – No, people can hang out in there without drinking anything. (Conversation November 2009).

Have those groups of the most deprived economic backgrounds left public space, and retreated into less accessible places? Are cages obsolete? Will other groups find the cages attractive? We cannot say who they are, or how their peer groups will be composed. Hannerz found in his re-visit that the streetcorner men had vanished: “The Winston Street that I had known was evidently a place in the past.” (Hannerz 2004:219). Is it possible that the cage days are over?

#### **C.I.5.3.2. Park Girl Groups**

Apart from the girls who use parks after school or while running errands, and shift between parks, high streets, and the larger district and common urban areas (see above), real park-based girl groups are generally still rather hard to come by. There are some seasons and some parks where a park girl group will exist. These groups are usually composed of less controlled, younger girls.



There is a larger inter-generational girl group up in the Schulpark. They're from 5 or 6 to 13, 14 years old. They spend the afternoons together in the park, the nearby youth center, or the Parkbetreuung room. Sometimes they leave the district to stray further. They live in the neighborhood, but often girls related to them come to the park to visit them. They share language and background, and some are sisters, cousins and aunts or nieces of each other. They are somehow evasive and secretive, following their own plans and ideas. They organized a quite cool winter party once: "Brooklyn im Schulpark". Another time, they planned an indoor party; the flyer showed a naked couple engaged in 'petting'. (2006).

This girl group is in my model a closed group because their exclusively female members share language, even family background, and outlook, and are together almost constantly. As a closed girl group they also stray further, may arrange meetings and meet people in the larger city (with boys presumably of their own backgrounds) away from neighborhood control.

A similar park girl group existed in the Schulpark in 1999 and 2000, consisting of about ten girls between 13 and 16, sometimes including younger siblings. The group was well-established and the girls were together almost constantly. Many were related to each other. As time went on, the older girls got engaged and married, and had children of their own. Two girls moved to another district. The group's park attendance became less.

Now and then, members of the girl groups come to their former park:

I meet Mi. in the park; haven't seen her for a long time! She has three small children who now play in the cage. We talk about the old times: most of their group are mothers now. She mentions how solidarity and caring for each other had been the most important thing for all

of them! The new groups now dominating the park lack this solidarity, she says. (Summer 2007).

#### **C.I.5.3.3. Incipient Gangs**

I can not give much data on gangs. Youth who start doing drugs, or involve themselves in other illegal activities, usually avoid youth workers in the parks, or merely greet them from a distance. Others are even more clearly withdrawn. A few try to maintain friendly terms with youth workers, but are hostile to the latters' efforts to come into contact with other adolescents – and this may result in a serious breakdown in the relationship between street youth workers and park adolescents.

Again, trouble with Ys. He stalked a girl. In the ensuing fights and chases, some of his friends show up in Flusser Park. Where did he meet them? They are not from the district! They are allegedly carrying guns (so the girl told us), and never far from jail. They are 17, but know people with cars. They followed the girl in a car after school. One boy's father is a dentist, and he says his family is quite liberal. They are obviously up to illegal activities, and consequently avoid us from then on. Only Ys. hangs around for a few more days, before he gets busted with a stolen moped which he tried to transport on the subway. He phones me from jail, needs help in making sense of some documents, as he is almost illiterate. (2006).

Some of the groups take to an illegal way of life from an early age. Juvenile delinquency (violence, robbery, theft, drugs) leads some into such careers. If a group's main purpose is resource-acquisition, I term it a gang.

A part of the refugee group moved on to form a gang who faced trial in June 2007 due to many violent offences, theft and robbery.

*Incipient* gangs are gangs not yet fully structured around economic goals, but headed in that direction: they are gangs in embryo, groups on their way to criminal activities but not yet beyond the stage of such petty larceny as bicycle theft for some older guy. Though they often start as a closed group, the original bonding principle (ethnic, religious, political) gradually becomes less important, as the use of violence and crime grows within the group.

Many boys do have a police record before age 14, after which they get formally busted for any offence. Violence and robbery, often connected to developing gangs, are the most frequent crimes. Some boys can be very violent and aggressive, which sometimes results in their exclusion from their (former) peer group; but often a more violent group, or an incipient gang, is ready to take him in. Strategic fusion with groups or persons with relevant criminal 'experience' occur frequently.

A fully-fledged gang involves larger criminal operations and older boys who take advantage of younger ones by using them as messengers, go-betweens and the like. Any gang worth the name, however, gradually leaves the park, and also the district, to pursue their activities. They will establish themselves in remote, secret meeting places which cannot easily be accessed by outside adults (including social workers). Consequently, such groups are not part of this study.

In some cases we (the youth workers) were able to build up a new relationship with the adolescents during or after their jail sentences. Juvenile delinquency often is a passing phase, a fact taken in account in

the youth law and the separate court for people under 18, the *Jugendgerichtshof*<sup>51</sup>.

To conclude, groups are far from homogeneous. They have their special features, and are in constant change over time and space. The character of the groups ranges from violent incipient 'gangs' through "closed" cage groups with neo-nationalistic and religious tendencies lacking access to 'better' facilities, to groups of "open" adolescents who make fairly good use of their competences because the peer group has helped shape and develop their social and creative skills.

These groups are also subjected to fission and fusion processes, and some examples will follow.

#### **C.I.5.4. Fission and Fusion Processes: Some Examples**

##### **C.I.5.4.1. Fission**

In one soccer cage group, Ku. began to smoke more ganja than the others, hanging out with people who also smoked a lot. The rest of the group (one of them his brother) got worried and tried to hold him back, but he seemed to like his new life better. Slowly, he moved out of the group altogether, as they did not stop hassling him.

In another soccer cage, Mu. started questioning the nationalism and Islamism of the groups and arrived at fresh attitudes, while meeting people with a more open view and different political approach as well. In many discussions with the various groups, he shaped his own

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<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately long gone as a separate institution in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, despite youth workers' protests against its closure. The youth trials now take place at the *Landesgericht*.

approach more clearly; he also criticized his former peers due to their racism. Eventually he moved on both spatially, as well as intellectually, away from the cage and the park.

In closed boy's groups (cage groups, e.g.), fission processes are very rough, often connected to physical violence. When a boy leaves a group, he might abandon the cage and the park completely as well. These groups are constantly engaged in discussions and debates on everyday life, football, the cage and the park, group structures, personal conduct of members and outsiders etc., and though this might lead to a considerable amount of hassle and disagreement, the general and shared wish is to keep the group together.

Two boys aged 15 provoked a third to snatch a woman's handbag in a busy street (Pilgramgasse) in the early evening. The woman, however, did not let go of her bag. All three boys came back to the park, very excited and anxious that they had been seen (one wore a new white jacket). The other group members did not approve of the attempt and looked on mischievously. Consequently, this 'career' has been given up by the boys.

Crime and drugs are major reasons for fission processes. Groups, especially closed groups, might go into drug use or crime together. If part of the group does not want to join, debates and discussions ensue that often end in group fission.

The open Seitstiegen Park group also suffered fission processes:

The group was stable for years in their park and cage, especially the boys. As they grew older, they started going out together, opening up more. The Serbian brothers moved to another district and slowly contact with them became less frequent. New girls joined the group, the Pakistani brothers also moved away, but stayed in contact. By and by, the group left the park

and cage altogether and started meeting at clubs. However, fission processes were at work all the time; people spoke critically about others due to their conduct, why he/she didn't do this or that, "he got strange", "he does not care about us any more", "she goes to different places now". The group members have moved on, finding their personal ways into society. Still, they occasionally meet each other and know about the others.

Girls, as was mentioned above, often bond in pairs, sometimes in an almost twin-like friendship. They are almost constantly together, share everything, often even wear identical clothes, or wear each other's clothes. But then, over night, they might become enemies. We have observed such fissions numerous times over the years. Girls also form such intimate relationships quite quickly.

People move out of their groups and cages if they start to take hard drugs: they will leave the district altogether and frequent the drug scenes which are less local and open to everybody. Others return to the district and the parks in order to sell drugs to their former peers. This leads to fusion and fission processes also, depending on who becomes client and/or pusher, and who does not participate.

#### **C.I.5.4.2. Fusion**

Let us look now into processes of group fusion, which may happen quickly, often in anticipation of a fight against intruders who challenge the park and cage groups. Sometimes fusion with older relatives occurs in "defense" against, say, groups from other districts. This happens when a cage group or another closed group leaves their local area and goes to common urban areas, where they are bound to run into other closed groups. In the ensuing fights and quarrels, the groups find out from which park or cage their enemies originate, and go there for revenge.

Weapons might well be involved, and these fights easily get out of hand, as happened when a Muslim Macedonian Roma group got involved with a Turkish group from a transdanubian district.

Other fusions originate in a group's search for more, better, or different park spaces:

A group of Serbian Roma moved from their very small park to another park. This movement was gradual, and began with a number of the Roma playing cards on a table of the new park. This continued for the whole summer. The group was rather large and included boys and girls, smaller children and large dogs. Because they knew the people in the new park, and did not challenge the soccer cage group, things went smoothly, and everyone's acceptance gave the park a home-like feeling.

A soccer cage group, based on twin boys, whose soccer cage was modified and opened up to give girls a chance to play, moved - after two years of considerable frustration with the new cage - to another park with a "proper" soccer cage. They fused with the group occupying this cage, and now some boys of the combined group go to *both* parks and cages, others only to one. But they all form a large group which is not as closed as either of the former groups had been. It is an all-male group, Turkish with one Serbian boy.

Fusion also takes place if the younger cage group, as they grow older, replaces the former group, whose members might still show up occasionally at the park:

In one instance, an older, all male, "open" cage group (two Kurds - one from Iraq, one from Turkey, a Shiite Iraqi boy, several Turkish boys, one Albanian from Skopje) left their cage gradually and were superceded by an all-Turkish and rather closed cage group. Members of the

older group sometimes returned to play, and were always welcomed by the new group.

These fusion processes involved groups who eventually opened up to mingle with other groups. Special fusion processes sometimes lead to the forming of larger groups, up to fifty or more adolescents.

#### **C.I.5.4.3. Large Group Formation**

Formation of larger groups – usually from open, sexually-mixed groups - occurs at such favorable times for fusion as spring or summer, when the weather encourages people to get together. Their gathering may then turn into ‘movements’, attracting others. These gatherings take place in or near one group’s park.

The Seitstiegen group gained considerable numbers of new members as people got older and started going out clubbing all over town, especially to the city center. New acquaintances came to visit them in their park; large groups hung out in warm summer nights until late, joking, talking, discussing, smoking pot occasionally. There were up to fifty or more adolescents - girls and boys, especially on weekends. The resulting conflicts with neighbors culminated in one neighbor emptying his chamber pot on the kids, who cursed back at him in rather drastic terms.

Group meetings, as this suggests, may be quite lively and loud, and do not escape the notice of neighbors. Complaints by them soon follow, which is likely to be met with resistance, as adolescents do not like grown-ups to interfere with them. Such conflicts can get ugly quite quickly and turn into long-term wars that include missiles, body fluids, and calls to the police. The adolescents’ desire for togetherness cannot be easily accommodated because kids are always in chronic need of money and resources. Alternative places for such meetings are hard to find for young inner city



dwellers. They believe they have a right to the park and do not want to go elsewhere. But the adult neighbors cannot move out either.

Especially a problem is teenage use of backstreets and *Wohnstrassen* (streets where traffic is reduced). Should the kids play soccer there as well, conflicts are programmed:

The GaGa group in the 5<sup>th</sup> District met in such a Wohnstrasse to chat on the benches and occasionally play soccer. The adolescents, all around 16, had jobs or apprenticeships, two as cooks, one as a builder. The group attracted other young people, and they met in the evenings with their girlfriends. Their soccer play was considered a nuisance by neighbors: the ball occasionally smashed cellar windows, or was shot high in the air in what the neighbors regarded as a dangerous manner. The shouts accompanying the games were felt by the adults to disturb their 'peace and quiet', and watching TV was seemingly impossible. The conflicts with the neighbors got out of hand in the course of the spring, degenerating into threats and name-calling. Some adults even said it would be better to have car traffic again - that the Wohnstrasse brought more troubles than the cars did. All the kids involved had lived in the neighborhood since their early childhood, they shared neo-national tendencies, and had, just like the adult neighbors, a majority background. (Summer 2003).

Communication within larger groups involves new relationships, which are expressed loudly and demonstratively with screaming, laughing, and joking - activities which, especially in narrow little side streets, later in the evenings, or at night, might be quite disturbing for neighbors.

In Vienna, youth workers are usually brought in to get the disputants together for negotiations. Both parties must give a little. Neighborhood and block parties of both youth and adults may defuse the conflicts, at least for a limited time.

Another cause of larger group formation is inter-generational park use, as in the Schulpark:

There is one very small and crowded park in the 5th District where a quite stable group of Serbian Roma girls and boys have met for many years. A second generation – for the girls bring their small children to the park – is already spending their childhood there. There is a large, multiply interconnected and multi-generational, group of about a hundred members, the older men play cards and the elderly share the scarce benches.

This park use by large intergenerational groups reflects their general economic deprivation without other options for meeting and spending leisure time. However, this park use is less dynamic than large youth meetings, and therefore, less problematic in the urban public space.

The Reumannplatz in the 10<sup>th</sup> District was one of the first meeting places of mainly migration-background youth at the beginning of the 1990s, and has been an attractive large-group gathering place for adolescents ever since. A large group formation with resistance on their agenda, which also involved violent encounters, started there: the Red Brothers.

### **Example: The Red Brothers**

The Red Brothers, who had their beginnings at Reumannplatz, were a large group formation with a special significance because it is due to them that Mobile youth work was initiated in Vienna. The following, a short history of the Red Brothers, draws upon the recollections of both adolescents and youth workers<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> I am grateful to Ercan Yalcinkaya for his professional recollections of “the old days”.

Parks and cages became increasingly important as meeting places to the growing numbers of children from migrant families who were coming of age around the end of the 1980s. Many of these children had already started to explore their neighborhoods in ever widening circles; and many had formed friendship groups. As teenagers feeling the economic pressure of their working-class backgrounds with increasingly limited options, they responded by meeting and hanging out together, using public space and places for games, sports, sexual encounters, and other activities. The parks in their older, working-class, inner-city neighborhoods gave them the venue for acquiring social and other skills (sports, culture, communication) – all part of their growing up.

Conflicts among park users – contested spaces in densely built-up urban surroundings – emerged mainly around the soccer cages, but occurred also in other areas among various user groups of differing backgrounds.

Apart from these local processes in the parks, there was the larger urban context of the general political climate at that time: specifically, the existence of a definitely right-wing, young working-class reluctant to grant positions in what they thought of as “their” city - and country, for that matter.

Formed as a street-based self-defence movement against right-wing and hooligan group attacks<sup>53</sup>, the first large migration-background group were the Red Brothers.

„Ich erinnere mich, sie waren mal im Park, sie hatten rote Halstücher, oder am Arm, und Kopftücher – und sie hatten ihre Geldbörsen mit Ketten an der Hose befestigt, Levis Hosen. Und

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<sup>53</sup> On the Red Brothers and other youth groups in Vienna at that time, see the documentary film by Egon Humer, „Running Wild“. Many former park kids participated, and today remember ‘the good old times’.

Bomberjacken." ("I remember, they came to the park once, they had red neckties, also on the sleeve, and on their heads – and their wallets were tightened to their pants with chains. Levis pants. And bomber jackets.")

There were more than one hundred of them, and they mainly congregated at Reumannplatz in the 10<sup>th</sup> District. The Brothers had a general philosophy of defense against physical attacks and assaults upon their generally immigrant, non-Austrian, and working-class background. They saw things from a post-national perspective both regarding their own status in Vienna, because most had been born here and therefore had Austrian citizenship, and as a result of the diverse assortment of people who sided with them, which included majority Austrians, younger brothers, and a number of girls:

„Meine Schwester war bei den Red Brothers, sie war auch manchmal bewaffnet, mit Messer und so.“ ("my sister was with the Red Brothers, she was sometimes armed, with knives and such"). (Conversation with Sh, from the 15<sup>th</sup> District, 2008).

Anyway, the Red Brothers were no 'softies'. With time on their hands, and growing strength, solidarity, *and* a lust for battle, the results were ever larger and uglier fights.

The unrest and the violent conflicts alerted the city municipality to their misguided efforts at "integration". While "white" or non-foreign right-wing groups have been standard in Vienna, the self-empowered resistance movement of the Red Brothers and their older and younger brothers, sisters, and peers – who called themselves "White Lives" in imitation of Los Angeles' gangs and their "colors"<sup>54</sup> - resulted in communally-funded and area-based youth street-work. This was first implemented in 1992 in

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<sup>54</sup> "Colors", a movie by Dennis Hopper.

the 10<sup>th</sup> District (*Back on Stage 10*). Numerous other projects followed<sup>55</sup>, resulting in the large variety of youth work now present in most Viennese districts.

Park and cage attendance increased, and parks got more recognition from the municipal authorities in the form of new equipment, more open spaces, and multiple-user designs. By 1997 the youth's park life included a large variety of groups and approaches, and increasingly more people became socialized in parks. This has resulted in a large number of adult, "post-park" people who remember the old park days.

Because park groups come into existence, grow, and vanish again, this is not a stable research field. My observations in this chapter were meant to establish some insight into the processes going on within and among the park groups. I have introduced some groups, and adolescents from them will be cited and described in more detail in the following parts of the ethnography.

The next chapter is dedicated to bodies: health, styles, bodily practices, sexuality in the park, music. Concluding it are some of the older kids' responses when asked, "How do you feel?".

### **C.I.6. Bodies: Some Aspects**

Sa.: "Ich lebe eh gesund, mit Ecstasy und Kokain, haha, ein Scherz". ("I'm living healthy anyway, with ecstasy and cocain, haha, a joke.") (Interview 2005.)

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<sup>55</sup> *Echo*, originally part of *Verein Wiener Jugendzentren*, was specifically aimed at youth from immigrant backgrounds and dedicated to promoting them through cultural projects. *Echo* then became a newspaper redaction collective which publishes *Biber* in Vienna.

### **C.I.6.1. Health**

Health issues are not very high on the park kids' agenda of knowledge and interest. The younger park kids' health behavior has been given attention by B. Schindlauer (2008). He finds their health behavior to be problematic due to various reasons. As for older adolescents (from 17 to 21 years), my observation is that they more often feel bad because of their jobs or from unemployment.

My experience is that park adolescents' health is largely determined – apart from their own health behavior – by the urban surroundings they dwell in. Headaches, stomach aches, and general bad health are largely caused by unhealthy surroundings both in the park and in their homes. Risk behavior in sports on dangerous grounds, accidents, neglected colds, unhealthy diet, smoking at a very young age and more add to the physical stresses inherent in the urban surroundings. (See also Schindlauer 2008.)

The kids' knowledge about the human body is varied, but usually quite limited. The same is true of their information about healthy foods and diets. There are not many obese kids in the park – they all move about quite a lot, especially the soccer- or basketball-playing youths – but if they outgrow park life and turn to a more sedentary leisure lifestyle (with increased time in front of computers and TV screens, play stations, but also in cars and betting cafés), their health will probably deteriorate (including gaining weight). This is confirmed by Schindlauer's data.

Going to the countryside with park groups – to a basic wooden hut in alpine Styria – always was great fun. Making a fire and roasting sausages and potatoes was very much enjoyed. However, the black nights usually frightened the kids – even, or especially, the 'bad boys' from incipient gangs. They also were totally ignorant about how to find one's way in the woods. Collecting mushrooms and berries was new

to them, as was firing the stove in the hut's kitchen.

The urban park adolescents have no access to the countryside – apart from several majority kids who have grandparents in rural areas – and know nothing about recreation through hiking, climbing, skiing, and so on. They have no knowledge about plants and animals – the natural surroundings – and often cannot even identify the types of trees, shrubs, or flowers in the parks.

However, I found that the park kids' access to health services (doctors and hospitals) is good: they are aware of, and use, the city's health-care services.

Sports other than soccer, basketball, and breakdance (see below) are seldom park kids' pastimes. One boy (Su.) plays cricket with his Sri Lankan friends. Park acrobatics were popular with kids in the 1990s (jumping over benches). Some boys, especially older ones and on into adulthood, are interested in Martial Arts. However, in general the kids lack the information, material, and money to pursue a large variety of athletics.

#### **C.I.6.2. Body Styles**

There are no definitely distinguishable park styles. Groups and persons are more or less, but not ostentatiously, dressed up. Brands are known to some; in general, they have a decent and cool, not conspicuous style. Park kids rarely dress in Punk, Mods, Rockers, or what other 'classic' youth cultural styles there might be. Soccer players are of course clad practically, sports shoes are the most important part of their clothing to them. It is not possible to identify group members by their dress (no 'gang' marks): only close friends (often girls in dyadic pairs) might intentionally dress similarly.

However, kids dress up specially for going out to clubs or discos. Mu. spoke of satin clothes and narrow pants, with silken shirts. This style – taken from TV mafia series – was not well received by club bouncers, though, especially since the boys dressed this way tended to show up in groups.

Se. is basically content with his looks and body, "weil ich derzeit nichts mache" ("because I don't do anything at the moment" – meaning: no training and protein drinks). He wants to go to the fitness center again, to do Tae Bo, but also to pump up his body with training and protein: "aufprotzen – es ist schöner, und den Mädels was zum anfassen bieten" ("it looks better", and he wants to offer the girls "something to grab"). "Wenn du zum Beispiel auf der Baustelle arbeitest, brauchst du kein fitness center" ("If you work at a building site, you don't need the fitness center"). He does not think he harms his body; he is not very interested in it, though: "mich interessieren Autos, das hat andere Organe, die kann man tunen" ("I'm interested in cars, they have different organs, they can be tuned"). The motor, he says, is like a heart (Interview 2005).

Solariums, fitness centers, hairdressers, barbers, clothes stores, tattoo and piercing parlors are an integral to contemporary youth consumerism.

"Hair is adolescents' god", my colleague Hossein once said, and opened his open-air park *Salon Gabi*, a mobile hairdresser shop where he tended to park kids' hair. (*Salon Gabi*, active from 1998 to 2001). One of his park customers was Ja. from the Seitenstieg park group.

Ja. looks like a male model: his eyebrows are always carefully trimmed (as he tells us of his father's); his hair is lush and long in front, and his clothes are always new and immaculately clean. He is in every respect fashion-conscious: urban HipHop, street-style, with the



relevant brands, and down-dressed regarding colors and cuts. He, and also his brother Mh., are exceptionally slim: my colleague commented on them, "Du glaubst, die brechen ab", ("you think they will break".)

Ke., another Seitstiegen park group member, is obsessed with expensive haute couture, especially T-shirts and shoes. He owns about 30 pairs of designer brand sneakers. He is slim, and muscular from breakdancing. A girl said of his backside: "Look at that! Like an apricot!" - Each time I see him he is more tanned: his euphoria for the solarium has turned into an obsession.

Ja. and Ke., originally from an open cage park group, are increasingly moving into urban areas.

Kids from park groups apparently go to body styling places for adults. However, I lack direct observations of this.

It is winter. I notice that Ke. is more tanned each time we meet. Upon my questions, he says, "Ja, es ist schon zuviel geworden, aber es ist so angenehm", ("yes, it is already too much, but it is so cosy"). - My following own solarium experience was on Urban Loritz Platz on a gruesomely cold and snowy Sunday. The earphones provided 6 different tracks of loud and fast music, while the gleaming rays pierced the body. Aha! I get the picture: it is a kind of lying-down disco. The whole ambience is adjusted for young users, among them obviously the girl working at the counter. (2006, 2009).

These consumption places include the fashion boutiques, outlets, fitness centers, tattooing and piercing parlors, solariums, hair, nail and manicure shops, and sports clubs which are common city spaces: one must leave the neighborhood to get to them, and access is costly and good conduct required. These places become important for some adolescents when

about 15 or 16 years old, and are also a part of the adult world of consumption.

It must have been around 2006 when I first noticed that breakdance was less interesting to the b-boys; Su. increasingly often carried a sports bag with him, and mentioned going to the fitness center on Mariahilfer Strasse quite frequently. We joke around and say "fuckness center" instead - it seems to be a place to meet women.

These new experiences in such places can be termed consumption-oriented initiations, including body-related experiences, which are immediately expressed in styles, forms, looks.

Solarium and clothes shops, consumption places for adults, are very important for some park adolescents, and increasingly so as they grow older and have more money. The relevant body styles and practices are an integral part of the consumer-based lifestyle sported in common urban areas and has, for park kids, become an expression of belonging to the large urban youth scenes.

Boys in the poorer park groups do not have enough money to share these looks, and also often lack interest in them anyway: they are mainly interested in soccer. And it is hard for them to conform to the urban crowds in clubs, malls, and shopping areas. For many soccer park boys, "style" is not very important. However, as soon as they wish to take part in urban pastimes like clubbing, they find that their mode of dress is unwelcome in clubs and discos.

Those who work in clubs and discos as dancers or in service areas are necessarily the best dressed and most made-up of the youth.

Street style often becomes fashionable in mainstream couture and the fashion world. Park youth thus both set and copy trends, though others are largely unaware of them. Open groups tend to be much more fashion- and style-conscious than closed groups.

Helena Wulff stated, "Most of the girls' consumption was directly connected to their *bodies*, and they cultivated their own aesthetic of ethnic equality through their youth styles" (Wulff 1995:72f). This is especially true for older adolescents who have more resources and mobility and spend more time in the common urban areas among larger urban crowds and scenes. They participate in these 'urban' consumption patterns.

On the whole, the kids expressed no great desire for change in physical appearance - at least in 2005 when I conducted my interviews. The interviewed boys and the girl were self-confident in, and content with, their looks, but they did want to become even better-looking, which meant for the boys to gain muscles.

In recent tales a nose-job came up: One young man is said to have invested his gambling winnings in cosmetic nose surgery; but, according to his friends, "Die Nase war vorher absolut in Ordnung. Seither haben wir ihn nicht mehr gesehen" ("the nose was absolutely ok before. We haven't seen him since.") (November 2009).

Beauty OPs might become more popular with park kids.

On the whole, I found that the park kids – whether style-conscious or not – are content with their looks, self-confident, and don't suffer from inferiority complexes. It seems that being part of a peer group – as all park kids are – certainly helps their positive self-view.

However, there are hints that girls become victimized by mediated body images: during girls' picnics in parks, when food and nutrition could be discussed, it appeared that some girls are embarrassed to eat in front of others. Some are afraid to eat too much, and try to eat as small portions as possible. Several girls said that their boyfriends wanted them to be slim, and scolded them if they ate at all. The girls also seemed to lack knowledge about healthy foods, and how to prepare them.

### C.I.6.3. Food

Sa. from Seitstiegen Park often goes out to eat, but "zu Hause kocht Mama" ("at home, Mama does the cooking"). He can cook himself (eggs, spaghetti, Griessnockerlsuppe), "es ist aber Frauenarbeit" ("but it is women's work"). (Interview 2005)

Weichmann park Sf.'s mother does the cooking at home, and Sf. himself can cook as well: *melemen* (eggs with vegetables), potatoes, other simple things. But he often eats "draussen" ("outside"): kebab, pizza. (Interview 2005).

Ke. is a fan of military food, "das beste Essen von ganz Österreich" ("Austria's best food"), and he thinks regular eating is very good, very healthy. He would like to gain a bit of weight. He enjoys the regularity of army life. (Interview 2005).

Ae. always goes out to eat after getting up late. He eats fast food, including traditional Viennese fast food. He tries to avoid his mother if possible. (Interview 2005).

Fast food is eaten by all, either on a daily basis, or just occasionally: hamburgers, pizza, schnitzel, and kebab are mentioned. If the food available at home cannot be easily warmed up, they usually order, or go out for, fast food.

Family meals were not mentioned at all during the 9 interviews in 2005.

The de-structuring of daily life due to unemployment or jobs at odd hours, as well as the dissolution of the old working-class weekend-based life, have led to a “self-service food culture” in the homes where every family member consults the fridge after coming home.

Adolescent boys bring their own take-away food home late at night to eat in front of the TV. Or the boys fry up some eggs in the kitchen after coming home from work or from the park.

Breakfast is often eaten very late, sometimes after noon, when the youngsters get up after everybody else has left.

De., aged 17, a female member of the Seitenstieg park group, does shopping and cooking if her mother and younger brothers are on holidays. She quite enjoys it; but she also cooks for the family often anyway. (Interview 2005).

Su. lives in a students' home where he shares his room with another boy, who works as a cook. Su. says that they like to cook together, and often do. He learned it from his father, but also has some experience in it from working in the catering business. (2005).

De. and Su. are the exceptions among park kids, who largely feed on the fast food available on the shopping streets near the park neighborhoods. Both are older, and learned cooking (and shopping) from their father or mother. All the others are increasingly dependent on fast food or their mothers' cooking and shopping. As Schindlauer remarks, “Ein immer grösser werdendes Angebot an Fast Food Möglichkeiten und ein unausgewogenes Kochverhalten zu Hause drängt die Jugendlichen immer mehr in eine ungesunde Ernährung” („The increasing fast food options on

offer, and poorly-balanced cooking at home, pushes the adolescents more and more towards an unhealthy diet“, transl. DM) (2008:59).

As I have no “control group” data (of adolescents not park-based), it is not possible here to say if park-group kids have an especially unhealthy life style. However, Schindlauer sees the park kids’ nutritional habits, together with their smoking and often sedentary leisure time activities, as definite health risk factors (Schindlauer 2008:64).

#### **C.I.6.4. Love and Sexuality**

Some kids can trust their parents, and are allowed to bring girlfriends or boyfriends home for the afternoons, or are allowed to sleep over. The kids will of course also take advantage of their parents’ and other family members’ absence to have girl- or boyfriends at home. Park-based mixed groups promote sexual interactions between group members, and relevant experiences are embedded in the group. Usually there are peers with whom one can share these experiences. Peer group life goes on as usual.

Ke. and his girlfriend Ma. often hang out at his place. He says that her father is not entirely enthusiastic about him because he sees him as a Turk. (Interview 2005).

Park youths who live a post-racial, multi-ethnic style may face difficulties with their parents who do not share their offsprings’ open views, or simply are not sure about these relationships. They are not aware of how at ease their kids are with adolescents from ‘other’ backgrounds and how they find such social relationships quite natural.

Ra. was a basketball player in Flusser Park, and often came with his peers and sometimes with his younger siblings. He has travelled to Pakistan, the USA, and Germany. His experiences with love:

Ra. was recently left by his German girlfriend; her feelings were not as strong as his. However, her parents did not accept him because he is a Muslim, „Die kennen so was nicht“, „They don't know anything like that“. Anyway, his parents were not sure either, hesitant ... but his mother had sewn Pakistani clothes for her. His sad experience has acutely influenced his opinions of 'mixed' relationships. He says, „Lovesickness is a European problem ... Pakistan, Saudi-Arabia are different. The girls are brought up differently, family-oriented.“ He says that he loves independent women, but shares the Pakistani mentality. „Spasskultur nervt, Heirat ist nicht nur Liebe, wenn die Liebe nachlässt, kommen die Kompromisse. Ehrlich, nach meinen Erfahrungen möchte ich zurück nach Karachi und dort heiraten.“ („Fun culture is a nuisance, marriage isn't just love, when love becomes less, then compromising starts. Honestly, after my experiences I want to go back to Karachi and get married there.“) (Interview 2003).

In some open groups - sexually mixed but with conservative views on male/female relationships - the girls are more restricted and controlled by either brothers or boyfriends. The boyfriend has to be approved of by the girl's brother. Girls often must stay behind if boys prefer to go out on their own.

One girl told me that she had given her mobile phone to her prospective boyfriend so that he could check her calls. She says that she likes him to be jealous like that. (2006).

The girls sometimes share the conservative view of boys. If they don't, they avoid the group if they can. But this can lead to considerable stress, fights, and open breaks.

Park boys from closed groups who begin to get interested in girls must leave their cage to meet any: they go to the local youth centers, or

frequent malls. Cage boys often lack the looks and behavior necessary for going to the “better” places. And they might be banned from the mall because of fighting, stealing, rowdyism, or other forms of misconduct. So when a boy sees a girl on the street who he fancies he will try to approach her (preferably without his peers present). Certain parks and cages, and boy groups with whom they have had unpleasant experiences with, have bad reputation with the girls.

A park boy who does succeed in getting to know a girl does not want to meet her in the park, but prefers to take her somewhere else. It is not common to bring a girlfriend to the park. They do not consider the parks or their peers as suitable for a girl:

Mu. went home from the park. On the road he saw, at some distance, an older park boy with a girl and greeted him with a nod. The other boy did not react. Next day, in the park, that guy tried to hit him! He was furious at Mu.: “Never do this again, that was my fiancée! Greet me with respect, you idiot!!” The girl had just arrived from Anatolia. (1995).

If a family wishes to find a suitable spouse for their son (which is likely given the fact that park boys from closed groups have difficulties meeting girls in Vienna), they often do so back in their home country. Such relationships may be quite important to both partners and lead to marriage. This marks the end of the park boy’s boyhood. He will still meet his park peer group, but not in the company of his wife<sup>56</sup>.

A special reason many boys have for tolerating girls in the park is sex. The girls involved are not the boys’ girlfriends, but other girls, sometimes older, interested in sexual activities. Park and cage boys who cannot meet ‘nice’

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<sup>56</sup> This parallels Hannerz’ and Liebow’s findings from the 1960s ghetto streetcorner society: it does not influence a man’s social behavior whether he man is single, married, or has a girlfriend. Similar information comes from W.F. Whyte.



girls need to stray further, to such uncontrolled areas as the Prater. It is tougher girls whom they tend to meet there, sexually experienced girls used to handling situations with boys.

Sexual activities take place in parks and interstitial spaces. Both boys and girls are keen on these experiences and experiments; but the power relations in sexual park activities are often in favor of the males. This can involve misuse, exploitation, verbal abuse, and sometimes rape. Forms of exploitation include taking pornographic pictures of the girl and circulating or selling them. Usually *groups* are involved in these sexual activities, at least from the boys' side: the girls were alone or in pairs.

While such experiences actually do happen, there is often a certain amount of imaginative embellishment to the stories and rumours.

Boys and girls need to have experiences with sexuality, and long for them. A neighborhood park is not necessarily the worst place for experimenting: it is well-known territory, and the adolescents usually know each other. Rumours, horror stories from their friends and other girls and boys, warnings from parents, might backfire and push girls into experiencing with sex in other, anonymous places which might ultimately prove more dangerous: cars, apartments, clubs, and far-away parks without people she knows around her.

No male homosexual relationships were openly lived in park surroundings. Two girls of a group were officially together, and went on holidays with one of the girl's family. Another girl frequents gay discotheques and meets her girlfriends there. These girls all were allowed to bring their girlfriends home, and had long-term relationships with them.

Sex is one money-making option for boys and girls. Some boys and girls start working at night clubs. If one is a good dancer, a promotion to go-go

dancing (sometimes in golden cages) might follow. Adolescents' interest in dancing, the desire for sexual experiences, the need to earn money, and the 'options' in night clubs and entertainment places make the transition to prostitution smooth and easy. There is a vast field for research here; but this study is one of park kids, and only brief notice can be given to their extended activities.

To conclude: Park kids' sexual behavior is connected to the kind of peer group of which a kid is part. Girls tend to stay away from parks as they get older, and meet their friends and partners elsewhere. Park and cage boys from closed groups have the most problems in meeting girls. Open, mixed boy and girl groups enable partners to interact in supportive and well-known peer surroundings. However, even in these groups there is sometimes abusive behavior. Occasionally this happens with the girls' consent. Other open groups have a partnership-oriented approach to sexual relations.

#### **C.I.6.5. Drugs**

##### **C.I.6.5.1. Tobacco**

8 of 9 interviewed adolescents between 17 and 21 smoke daily, regularly. Only one of them wants to quit (Interviews 2005). The boy who does not smoke at all plays soccer in a club.

Most adolescents in parks smoke cigarettes, some starting even before they are 10 years old. B. Schindlauer interviewed 12 park kids in 2006, and found that "10 of the 12 adolescents smoke. Only two girls ... don't, all of the boys smoke. They started smoking between 10 and 13 years and smoked increasingly more since then. ... between 10 and 30 cigarettes a day" (Schindlauer 2008:42).

Alcohol and tobacco are the dominant legal drugs in Austria. However, the use of alcohol is much more varied than the ubiquitous abuse of cigarettes.

#### C.I.6.5.2. Alcohol

Se. (18) smokes up to one pack a day, and rarely drinks more than one beer; at parties mostly soft drinks and Tequila. "Nicht mit jedem kann man trinken, die machen Blödsinn. Aber ich kenne die Leute, ich passe mich an." ("You can't drink with everybody, they do stupid things. But I know people, I adjust to them".) (Interview 2005).

These remarks surely have bad experiences underlying them (his own stupid things, maybe?) But park kids are critical towards the alcohol-drinking mainstream society around them. Though many of the park youths – including Se. – are of various Muslim backgrounds, we cannot simply assume that neither they nor their families drink<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore, some non-Muslim majority youths, too, regard alcohol as a despicable habit. Influential HipHopper crews, for example, completely abstained from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs<sup>58</sup>. The "techno" movement refrained from alcohol: they took ecstasy instead. Others, especially marijuana smokers, look down on alcohol drinkers. And so on. So rather than to jump to quick conclusions, it is necessary to observe the alcohol use among park youths.

While some say they used to drink a lot but now not any more, not like they used to, most others opt for a modest use, strictly social, ranging from "sometimes a small beer", to "one or two beers when going out". One says that he

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the chapter on Arabesk music and the *Gasino-Culture* connected with it, later in this study.

<sup>58</sup> For example, the Zulus from the Grossfeldsiedlung, who are oriented on Afrika Bambaata's 1970s and 1980s groups in the Bronx. On Bambaata and the Zulu Nation, see Toop (1994, especially pp. 86ff).

does not drink at all due to religious reasons, while one says his weekend pastime is *Saufen* (heavy drinking). (Interviews with nine adolescents, summer 2005).

My experiences with, and observations of, the park groups, indicate that alcohol is not an important drug to them. With some temporary and/or individual exceptions, alcohol does not interest young people very much. Schindlauer had this impression as well: "Especially boys are very reserved in their use of alcohol; but for girls too, it is not particularly popular" (2008:42, transl. by DM).

There are other experiences, of course:

A fairly unusual incidence involved a girls' group (13 years old) who smuggled lots of so-called *Alkopops* on an excursion into the country, where they got drunk quite quickly and suffered fits of violence and self-destruction, including suicidal passion. They were all Austrian majority girls, loosely affiliated with the *Seitstiegen* park group, but not necessarily regulars at the park. They used to go to the "Nachtschicht", a huge Trans-danubian majority youth discotheque<sup>59</sup>. Coma drinking is program there, and alcohol is at times ("happy hour") ridiculously cheap (Summer 2001).

Coma (binge) drinking is clearly part of some groups growing up in Vienna's majority working-class culture. It also seems to be a major leisure time activity in Austria's small towns and countryside. But it is not mentioned by, or observed very often in, the park groups. While many start going out to clubs when only 10 or 11 years old, drinking is not their main interest.

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<sup>59</sup> *Nachtschicht* ("night shift") recently changed its working-class name to *Club Couture*.

Some have experiences with alcoholism of fathers or mothers, which might cause them to drink themselves, or else turns them off completely to alcohol – difficult to say which way prevails.

Sf.: "Alcohol? Never. It is forbidden!" (Interview 2005). Yu. from the Seitstiegen group even refrained from using hair gel containing alcohol.

Declared Muslim adolescents strictly adhere to the prohibition against alcohol. Experiments with this mainstream drug do, however, occur:

On one cold evening in November 2006 a woman from television came with a camera team to interview some boys on the occurrences in the Parisian *banlieus*. My colleague and I had telephoned the Flusser Park cage boys and asked them to come to the office to be interviewed and filmed. They appeared, euphoric and drunk, from the park! They said it simply was the day to get drunk. So we go to the Seitstiegen Park for the shooting. Ys. appears too, not drunk, but crazy as always – they all scream into the camera: "Wir wollen Waffen und Weiber!" ("We want weapons and girls!")

Some get drunk in the park once or twice, like the boys (between ages 14 and 17) in the incident described above. Some Muslim park kids try drinking for some time; and many of the older youths said that they drank in earlier times:

Mu. says that he and his cage group – park kids in Erdberg in the 1990s – tried out alcohol when they were 15, 16 years of age. They saw other people drinking and decided to drink as well. They took to "stuff we knew from TV – whisky, vodka, rum". They drank in the park or in apartments of friends whose parents were away. They would get sick, vomit, come home drunk. When older, they had cars to go places with. One of them always stayed sober to drive. – Car owners were wary of the police, and feared for their driving licence and their

cars, especially as they often planned to go to Turkey by car in summer.

For them, cars and clubs (with girls) were more important than getting drunk. Mobility enabled frequenting places further away.

Cs. tells us about the homeless and bums in 'his' park. "There used to be Franz, Frankie and Anton, we knew them, and talked occasionally. They drank wine from these cheap packs already in the morning. They are all gone now; the guys that come now don't speak German, they're Polish, I think ..." - but they still interact, share cigarettes sometimes. (Conversation November 2009).

Most park kids have experiences with the bums, drunkards, and homeless who frequent the parks. The kids sometimes criticize them (for example, when they are drunk and aggressive), but also interact with them on friendly terms.

Initiation into a society's dominant drug(s) is surely one of the developmental tasks of adolescence. While most park kids smoke tobacco, alcohol is not important in parks. Many majority kids, though, try to come to terms with it, because alcohol is the main Austrian drug. A general resistance against alcohol and its users can be observed among other park kids. Some find modest recreational use of it ok, but, as Se. says, "You cannot drink with everybody". However, all this does not mean that drugs in general are absent from the park kids' lives.

#### **C.I.6.5.3. Cannabis**

At the beginning of the new millennium, there was a time when the Vienna Green Party advocated the legalization of cannabis. This was the only period I remember that park kids showed a lively interest in this party - and politics - at all. The topic came up with our

"Park Wahlen Projekt" and our efforts at forming a "Parklament"<sup>60</sup>. Other indications of interest appeared in self-organized youth group discussions for Park TV, in which drugs were the predominant issue.

Presently, the most interesting substance for park groups is cannabis<sup>61</sup>. 'Weed' and hashish are smoked by many older park groups, who tend to use it on into their adult years. Cannabinoids are the predominant park drugs at the moment, though use is curbed by lack of money, and also seldom mentioned openly<sup>62</sup>.

In summer of 2007, the younger Eremit park group's interests circled mainly around the question how to make hashish cookies. They eagerly tried to memorize recipes for normal cookies - an interest quite far off their tracks, if not for this enhanced dough.

In his chapter "Cannabis as a Cultural Style", Terence McKenna (1999:154ff.) mentions that cannabinoids place "a person in intuitive contact with less goal-oriented and less competitive behavior patterns, and thus could be seen as a substance furthering group feelings of solidarity". Further effects are increased phantasies, utopian visions, hilarity, and mellowness. Music and visual impressions are perceived more intensely.

"We started smoking in the park; then we went to where it could be bought. These small cafés changed very often, opened up and closed down again. We liked the atmosphere in these places, there was a mixture of people, and they were less aggressive, not like in the drinking

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<sup>60</sup> Park Wahlen, Parklament, and Park TV were projects with park kids initiated by mobile youth work.

<sup>61</sup> Chicago sociologist Howard Becker has provided us with the marvellous in-depth study *Outsiders* (1963), where he discusses marijuana use and social control as well as describes and analyses the initiations involved in "becoming a marihuana [sic] user". Anthropologists have used a snowball sampling approach to study cannabis users in Colombia (Kimball and Partridge 1979).

<sup>62</sup> See also Schindlauer 2008.

places. It was a laid-back mood, and we also liked the music there, we stopped listening to mainstream techno, started to become interested in other stuff, like this British trip-hop ... and somehow smoking seemed connected to black people, who we felt close to, and to a vague image of 'ghetto'<sup>63</sup>."

Some park groups also put cannabis into the context with an imagined 'Orient': Sufis traditionally use the drug, and the kids are aware of the fact that the homelands of cannabis were India, and Muslim countries which still are, or were, major producing areas.

#### **C.I.6.5.4. Heroin**

While cocaine is presently not a major issue in the parks because it is too expensive for the park kids' small purses, the misuse of heroin had enormous importance towards the end of the 1990s, with occasional later flare-ups.

XX., 17, a former soccer player with the junior set of the renowned Rapid club, encountered hard times with hard drugs. Becoming a pusher to finance his habit, he soon got into trouble everywhere, and even terrorized his mother for money. He began frequenting the parks less often, but kept drug-dealing contacts with some kids of the district.

People who start using hard drugs usually leave the parks and their (former) groups to move into the larger urban drug scenes (Karlsplatz, Schottenring, Stadtpark, Südtiroler Platz). These scenes "have room for everyone", as drug streetworkers say; and there is a network of supply plus social and medical services. During our research into these scenes we met a number of former park acquaintances from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> These vague images of 'ghetto' are shared by many park youths.



Districts, (then our youth work home bases), and came into contact with many other former park kids<sup>64</sup>.

Further discussion on the use of heroin exceeds the scope of this study, as users do presently not make up significant numbers in Viennese parks. To end this chapter, I quote Terence McKenna, who said that heroin is “the perfect drug for anyone who has been damaged by lack of self-esteem or traumatized by historical upheaval ... the drug of the resigned and dissolute, the victims unwilling or unable to fight back.” (McKenna 1999:208).

Intimately connected to present-day youth’s experiences are music and dancing: both are considered here as body styles. Music as an option for making money will be discussed in the chapter on work, jobs, and labor.

#### **C.I.6.6. Music as Experience**

Musical experiences are important for park adolescents. While music – melody and rhythm - influences the emotions directly, lyrics are poetry, opening new conceptual and imaginative worlds. Music thus synthesizes the affective and emotional with the intellectual, expressing them in physical sensation, and often in song and dance. Music experience and especially performance involves the whole person: there is no gap between feeling and knowing, experiencing and reflecting.

Opportunities to sing and play are enthusiastically seized by the park kids<sup>65</sup>. They perform anywhere they can, no matter how small or large the

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<sup>64</sup> For more in-depth information see Bericht SCHOP, Verein Wiener Sozialprojekte, 2000.

audience: rap and beatboxing battles, singing alone or with a group, karaoke, bands, folklore dances, and so on.

Sd. is a regular at Katzenpark. She is Ka.'s elder sister, and they spend much time together. They are members of a family who belongs to the Macedonian Roma community. The park has been a main meeting point for the generations, who annually celebrated the Parkfest, organized by the park groups themselves, and at which Sd. does the hosting. Live music is provided by their music groups. It is a real neighborhood party with everybody dancing the *kolo*, a traditional circle-dance.

#### **C.I.6.6.1. Globally Mixed**

Musical consumption and production styles are connected to transnational and global music.

Ra. listens to HipHop and also Bhangra, mixed with HipHop beats. The parties he goes to are at the *Volksgarten Pavillon* and the *P1* in Vienna's First District. These parties are frequented by a mixture of people - "white women in Saris, Indian girls wearing trousers", as he says. He also went to such parties in the USA while staying there with relatives for one year (Interview 2003).

Many kids listen to globalized Anglo-American "urban" black music like Hip Hop, R'n'B, and Soul.

DJ Hossein "Mastercash", well acquainted with park life, has brought modern R'n'B and park kids together at the *Volksgarten Club* every Friday from the mid-90s on, resulting in the

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<sup>65</sup> I have organized, or participated in organizing, several shows at large park festivals where park kids appeared on stage: Kids' Showcase at the *Themenpark* – Jugendliche Schuldlos Papierlos, Bacherpark, 1998; *The Beach*, ball cages Margaretengürtel, 2001; and 10 Years Back on Stage on Reumannplatz, 2002.

formation of an all-Viennese scene comprising mainly older teenagers from migration background, from both international schools and from the parks. But a very strict door policy (*Volksgarten* is a fancy inner city club with a longstanding tradition) has segregated "good" and "bad" park kids, into "in" or "out".

Depending on their language background, young park people listen to Turkish pop and Arabesk, Yugoslavean "Jugo" and "turbo" pop, and Bhangra and Bollywood film music. Especially those in the open groups are acquainted with many different forms of music. In Black music, however, many find they can identify with oppression, as this theme is featured in much of this music, at least as a sub-text.

#### **C.I.6.6.2. Rap**

Rap is listened to, and park kids at present like rapping and rhyming themselves.

There is a page glued to the styrofoam sliding door which gives access to the sand-box press center: „Hände weg vom Bachapark" ("Hands off the Bachapark"). These are from the lyrics of a rap written by park youth which has already been performed several times at the winter parties. Also, as by magic, other rap crews materialize to take part in one or the other rap battle. (January to June 2006. The Bacherpark resistance movements against the subterranean garage ended successfully when the poll they had demanded turned out against the garage).

"Rap, asserted Kurtis Blow at the time [1983], is 'a way for the people of the ghetto to make themselves heard'", maintained popular music expert Szatmary in 1991 (p. 284) – a fact which the park kids have not failed to notice, albeit in a vague way, and both due to and in spite of the mainstreaming of Rap in the 1980s.

Apart from fabricating one's own experiences into rap songs, many park boys have turned to mainstream rappers from the US like Tupac, Puff Daddy, Snoop Dogg and 50Cent, and the German Bushido and Sido (from the "Aggro Berlin" label, closed in 2009). These German rappers have styled themselves after the US artists. The Rappers' lyrics and sounds are aggressive and often misogynist in style. But their success has encouraged the kids' dreams, and they know the lyrics by heart.

Rap is also produced in Istanbul, and Ceza and his sister Ayben are well known in Vienna. Ceza played a gig in a ball cage at *Margaretengürtel* in 2006<sup>66</sup>) and at Disco *Nachtwerk* in March 2009. Ayben played a Rap gig on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Ottakring. Both musicians' texts speak of Istanbul and Turkey today, of political topics, personal experiences and development – youth topics. Ceza is widely-known among Turkish-speaking and other park youth, and has aroused much interest in Rapping, rhyming, and lyrics writing among Viennese youngsters.

„Aber mein größter Traum ist Rapper zu werden, das ist mein absoluter Traum. Ich bin schon auf dem Weg dahin. Ich und meine Band haben schon eigene CDs, wir gehen in Studios zum Proben, oder in den Park. Mein größtes Idol ist Ceza!“ (“But my biggest dream is to become a rapper, this is my absolute dream. I am already on that way. Me and my band, we have our own CDs already, we go to studios to rehearse, or to the park. My biggest idol is Ceza!”) (Verein Wr. Jugendzentren, *Parkgeschichten* 2006:37).

Ceza is, however, not much favored by many mainstream Rap fans who often find him too intellectual; while fans of Sagopa Kasmer (older, rapping with philosophical background) think that Ceza is shallow.

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<sup>66</sup> “Tuning the Cage” was part of *Into the City*, the street-styles-oriented productions of the high-culture festival *Wiener Festwochen*.

In the works of formerly park-based Viennese Rappers such as OTK, Stone Park, Nazar, and others, migration backgrounds have turned into the main frame of reference. It is a mirror of what society calls them: “foreigners”, “second” or “third” generation. Against this “dominant discourse” (in Baumann’s sense) they plea “origins do not matter”, “I am Viennese”, or the violent “get out of my park”.

The park movements have not been much influenced by other Viennese Black music scenes. Although sets in parks have been played<sup>67</sup> by “Demonflower” Werner Geier – the grand doyen of Vienna HipHop who prematurely died in 2007 –, by such famous DJs as DSL and Sugar B., and by younger HipHoppers Zuzee (from the major label act Waxolutionists), there has not been much intermingling.

I have elsewhere discussed Black music and the park kids<sup>68</sup>. Relevant to the meaning it has for the park adolescents is Tricia Rose’s observation about Rap:

Rap music ... articulates the chasm between black urban lived experience and dominant, ‘legitimate’ (e.g., neoliberal) ideologies regarding equal opportunity and racial inequality. (Rose 1994:102).

Aidan Southall wrote that “Ghetto rap, blues, rock and dance have made their indispensable contribution to cultural self-worth and survival, apart from being, with Coca-Cola and hamburgers, the American city’s most penetrating global export” (Southall 2000:393).

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<sup>67</sup> Organised by Christoph Möderndorfer for Back on Stage mobile youth work, especially from 1996 to 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Mayer 2008.

In a more general way, popular cultures of oppressed groups have all the features Brian Ward finds in Rhythm and Blues: a critique of the system within the forms of the dominant culture (Ward 1998:4). Different kinds of music serve as imagined worlds in the popular cultures of the park groups.

#### **C.I.6.6.3. “They Don’t Care About Us”: Michael Jackson**

Ring tone of a young boy’s mobile phone at the Cash and Star internet café: Michael Jackson’s “All I wanna say is that they don’t really care about us”. Some days later, a young kid enters Einsiedlerpark in the 5<sup>th</sup> District: his phone rings with Jackson’s *Billie Jean*. (August 2009).

Michael Jackson as a phenomenon was very important from the beginning to the middle of the 1990s, and was still very much liked in 1998 – a “street hero”, especially among kids with Roma backgrounds. Much of his popularity was due to his dance style. Every park had one or more boys who called themselves “Jackson”. His music and videos were the entry-ticket for many children into the world of global popular music – as for example Mu. reminisces:

“In the village in West Turkey, we all knew his songs, his impressive music videos, when we were still children. He was the first big US American pop star for us, the first black person we knew, and we followed his transformations through the years.” (Conversation 2008).

And as it seems, Michael Jackson is still big in the parks today.

#### C.I.6.6.4. Arabesk

Anatolian Arabesk<sup>69</sup> are very sad and pessimistic songs. In the 1960s and 1970s, in addition to mourning unrequited love, the lyrics of these songs emphasized the people's political suffering from unjust social structures. Topics included the migration from rural, often Eastern Anatolian, villages, and the processes of urbanization. Quite a few movies were produced in Turkey in the 1970s, filmed in the *gecekondus* of Istanbul, and mostly on the theme of an unhappy man who turns into a successful Arabesk singer.

Famous Arabesk artists include Ferdi Tayfur, Orhan Gencebay, Ibrahim Tatlis, and transvestite Bülent Ersoy. Listeners to Müslüm Gürses would often, as a traditional and ceremonial gesture, rip open their shirts and slash themselves with knives or razorblades, mostly across the chest or arms.

I encountered this practice in the Bacherpark when I got to know Mr., a then 15 year old park boy who showed us his scars. Mr. later became a plumber. (ca. 2002).

Arabesk came to Vienna via tapes and cassettes brought from Turkey. The contexts of migration, urbanization, and unjust social relations were not far from the people's experiences in Vienna. Arabesk was not youth music, but folk music shared by the old and young, expressing people's feelings and evoking faraway towns and cities. *Gasino-Culture* is the combination of drinking raki and other spirits while listening to Arabesk music and suffering from the lack of love or women in general, and also the absence of one woman in particular.

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<sup>69</sup> See also ethno-musicologist Stokes 1992.

"At school, we heard all the popular black stuff, Doctor Alban, MC Hammer ... but in the park, only Arabesk", says filmmaker Muzaffer Hasaltay of his park times in the 1990s. (Conversation 2008).

Arabesk is a bit passé today. The younger generation (those about 16 to 18 years old in 2009) in Viennese parks are not as acquainted with Arabesk as the park people and their parents of the 1990s<sup>70</sup>. Today's versions – R'n Besk - lack the socio-political criticism, merely promoting the new, urbanized, consumer-oriented globalized life-style of clothes, make-up, mobile phones, design, and furniture. In addition, US and German mainstream Rap, Turkish boy Ceza, or Viennese OTK have surely replaced Arabesk in the parks.

To conclude, Ke. is an excellent example of the park kids' mixed musical tastes with his musical preferences in 2003:

Ke. from the Seitstiegen group speaks Turkish with his family, but German with his younger sister. He has an Austrian girlfriend. His music: HipHop, but he is not interested in the lyrics. He also listens to Turkish music, especially Arabesk and Türk pop. Most important for him: Breakdance. He has a multi-background crew, the Bionic B-Boys, who meet and practice at several youth centers, in the parks, and at the apartments of friends. (Interview 2003).

## Dance

Dancing was the dominant interest of many park kids in the 1990s. Most did an urban disco style (Jacksonian), following hugely prominent singer and dancer Erdo from the 5<sup>th</sup> District. Others took a liking to Breakdance,

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<sup>70</sup> Ethno-marketing aimed at today's Turkish adults in Vienna makes use of these older Arabesk songs, for example in cheese commercials.



and the linoleum on park floors was part and parcel of every party<sup>71</sup>. However, the craze seems to have waned in recent years, at least concerning its performance in the park.

I now will turn to a different aspect of “bodies”. As they grow older, adolescents become increasingly aware of their position in society – one of the basic developmental tasks of adolescence. The following interview extracts are from my 2005 data collection on adolescents’ health behavior. We have already met most of the interviewees.

#### **C.I.6.7. Older Park Kids: How do you feel?**

In 2005 I asked 8 boys and one girl: “How do you feel?” All interviewees were between 17 and 21, and thus in the older segment of adolescent park users.

##### **C.I.6.7.1. Examples**

Ae., 19, had a self-induced accident after heavy drinking to celebrate the end of his time in the army. It is not easy for him to come to terms with his failure, being on an extended sickness leave (6 months) from his much-liked job as a builder. “How are you?” – „Nicht so super, das Arbeiten geht mir ab, alle Freunde arbeiten. Ich lasse alles auf mich zukommen, schlafe bis die Freunde anrufen“ („Not so good. I miss work, all my friends work. I let everything come to me, sleep until my friends call me“) – sometimes until the afternoon. He thinks that fate defines life. It can be a little, but not much, altered, and “alles hängt mit allem zusammen“, everything is connected to everything else. He often thinks “scho wieder

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<sup>71</sup> An account of the Breakdance crew Bionic B-Boys is in the appendix.

so a Scheißtag“, “another fucking day again“. He hopes that everything will turn out alright again, “Hoffnung ist das wichtigste, ohne Hoffnung ist man verloren“, hope is the most important thing, without hope one is lost. Ae. attended the Flusserpark in earlier years, sometimes together with his elder brother Ch. They also hung around their social housing complex at the Wolkenkratzerpark, and at the youth center. Both brothers, however, were not very deeply integrated into any group.

For some young men, the obligatory Austrian military service is something like a recess from the job-seeking front. Some found jobs before and can return there after service: but others already had quite a hard time looking – often vainly – for an apprenticeship or a job. While it disrupts the park peer groups at least temporarily, there are also new friends to be made in the army. Ae., however, must make ends meet, as his peers were his work-mates, and they all are now at an enormous financial advantage over him: he cannot keep up his former life-style. Although Ae. has a lot more money at hand than the other interviewees, he is the unhappiest of them.

Su. just turned 20. He now lives in a student- and pupil home, sharing his room with one boy. In the evenings he works as a cocktail mixer in a bar. Su. does not have Austrian citizenship yet; he came from Sri Lanka with his father. They lost their apartment, found another one, lost it again. Su. had to stay with friends, several youths from Sri Lanka, for some months which deeply depressed him. There was no room for him, and he carried his bag with clothes and his documents with him all the time. He felt humiliated and hopeless, but now it is better. He says he has been all the way down. One of his biggest problems now is his lack of citizenship. Su. is from the Seitstiegen group – an open group, but they could not help him in his homelessness as they are all still living with their parents. (Interview 2005).

Such homelessness does not very frequently occur, although some kids leave their homes to stay with friends for a certain time. Su's difficulties

were induced by his father – in difficult circumstances himself, often unemployed – and by lack of citizenship, which causes constant worry, costs for documents, less chance for work or welfare support – and any work he can get is likely to be low-paying.

We meet Za. again, who turned twenty already. He is on his own in the ball cage of Schulpark, shooting some baskets. He is bored and unhappy. We had not seen him for a longer time, he was a Flusser Park and Schulpark regular years ago. What happened? Lost his job, cannot find another, comes to the park because he cannot stand being at home all the time ...

Older adolescents without jobs feel they should not hang out in the park any more, and that if they do, it will show that they are losers. But alternative meeting places do not materialize. So by going to the park they tend to meet others in the same situation. Thus parks have turned from positive places for sports and fun into increasingly negative places, *heterotrope* in their disconnection to society.

In some respects, the free park life is very social and fun, with a diverting variety of experiences and lots of people. This is cool when people are young and moving into these structures, and at an age when economic standing is yet unimportant, and expenses easily shared and desires few. The park can be an enjoyable after-work hang-out, meeting the others. But with growing age and the lack of money, the hard facts of exclusion are felt, and the park life may turn sour. Too many wishes and too little money; too much time and nothing to fill it with. This is under-demand and will take its toll on one youth's spirits and self-view.

Their lack of success, at least in economic terms, causes older adolescents to become acutely aware of their exclusion from consumer-oriented urban life. Some seek explanations for this exclusion in their own biography, with much self-blame and frustration. Others feel that society is

injust, and blame capitalism and/or racism. These are problems which cannot be solved in park life with the peers.

#### **C.I.6.7.2. Under-Demand and Regularity**

Ke., 19, at the army at time of interview. "How do you feel?" - "Ja, eh gut, jetzt hab ich Freunde beim Heer. Aber ich hätt es mir anders vorgestellt, mit Führerschein machen und so, es ist alles schiefgelaufen. Aber Hauptschule war super." („Ok, now that I have friends in the army. But I imagined this differently, with a driving license, but everything went wrong. But school was super"). In the unstructured times between school and the army, going to the Seitstiegen park and meeting his friends was essential. They all still meet, forming the closely-knit Seitstiegenpark friendship group which supports its members in hard times.

For Ke., after difficult post-school times, the military service has brought regularity for him, which he enjoys.

The hours in the park can become very very long. After a soccer game and some chatting, the time begins to stretch into eternity.

The occupational structure defines the weekly structure. Those working in morning-to-evening jobs or military service rather liked the weekends, and they could make a distinction as to differing activities and daily routines. Those unemployed and/or on sick leave could not make this distinction as clearly, and could not name special activities connected to weekends. Most did not mention activities with their families on weekends at all. Only one said that the difference between weekends and other days was that his mother was home - but this seemed to stress him, and he avoided home on weekends (Interviews 2005).

The classic Monday to Friday, nine to five work routine has yielded to unstructured work schedules with few differences between weekdays and weekends, night and day. Families' time management has therefore also become less structured. Moreover, unemployment or overemployment (that is long work hours, or the extra time involved in running a small neighborhood business) has further fractured family routines. This of course also impacts the adolescents.

Sf. enjoys the strict structures of sports. He began playing soccer in a Verein a short time ago. - Su. sometimes felt like a grown-up vis-à-vis his father, with the father sometimes acting like an unruly child. He feels better since living on his own (in a pupils' home) where he can follow his own routines. - Ke. praises the regular meals in the military service. - De. says she is a lazy person, she needs a schedule and structures.

If a young person from the park background comes into structured circumstances which roughly fit his or her previous positive experiences – being together with peers or new friends in a supportive atmosphere – or which correspond to their expectations from life, then the adolescent often can accommodate to the new situation, and its structures are felt to be positive. An example are the regular meals in the military service mentioned by Ke. Regularity has been unknown to many of them before; but when it occurs, they often like it.

This reaction is a symptom of the chronic under-demand the adolescents face in their park lives. At school also they suffer a general feeling of marginalization, of not being anywhere, of uselessness. Park groups drop easily out of the structures that school offers them. They accommodated quickly to the self-sufficient park life and now see majority life merely from the outside.

But the self-structured under-demand of park groups quickly becomes the unsatisfying norm. Park time is rarely seen as productive, as something which furthers one's development. They find long-term planning impossible; and outside attempts at structuring their lives are not welcome.

Having now some knowledge on park kids, their groups, and their body styles and practices<sup>72</sup>, and given some consideration to the park youths' sense of under-demand, it is now time to discuss the park kids' interactions with contexts beyond the parks. Thus the second part of the ethnography will deal with the park kids' other spheres and realms apart from the park. The parks and cages are meeting places for the adolescents, their basic points of reference, topographically and socially; and park peer groups are their most important social contacts. But in growing up, they also develop the desire to venture out of the park at least occasionally and explore the surroundings and common urban areas.

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<sup>72</sup> I have not mentioned two park youth pastimes which can be seen as extensions of the body: fighting dogs; and cars. Quite a few groups took interest in them, and at the end of the 1990s, car racings on Triester Strasse, and illegal dog fights occurred regularly. But my ethnographic data are scarce. Moreover, cars and dogs could be considered more part of the adult consumer world.

## **C. Part II Spatial and Social Contexts**

First I will discuss how park kids experience the park neighborhoods and the common urban city spaces. Then I will consider the opportunities the internet and other mass media hold for park adolescents. Because of the importance of jobs and money to the adolescents in question, I have dedicated a separate chapter to those topics. Two social contexts where adolescents are least independent and autonomous are their family, and school. A discussion of the adolescents' experiences with, and reactions to, their or their parents' home countries - as part of transnational family contexts – and some considerations on school will close this second part of the ethnography.

### **C.II.1. Park Neighborhoods**

Apart from the public spaces around the parks - streets, stairways, dead-end alleys -, there are indoor places at the neighborhood level which are important for park youth. These are both commercial - such as betting shops and gambling arcades, certain internet cafés, coffeehouses - and institutional, such as the youth centers and occasionally meeting rooms of churches, mosques, and private associations.

Generally, institutional rooms are for the younger adolescents. For the older adolescents, commercial places become accessible and more important.

In respect to aspects of the network concepts mentioned earlier, neighborhood social structures – family businesses, institutions, local politicians - comprise people who belong to the adolescents' "extended" network segment.

### **C.II.1.1. Youth Centers and Rooms for Adolescents**

Vienna is a city with a long-standing welfare tradition. The City government offers much support to adolescents, and local youth centers are a major social and leisure resource for park kids. Depending on the groups and their conduct, they attend regularly or only sporadically. Park boys from closed groups are more likely not to have the social skills necessary for the youth centers, though they might have attended the centers in their younger years and are usually quite well acquainted with the local center and the people working there. The services offered by these centers are constantly adjusted and improved through professional networking and coaching.

The most important clubs for younger adolescents are the disco evenings in youth centers. There are one or more youth centers in the relevant districts; park kids, as the deprived groups targeted by these social institutions, will frequent the centers if they can manage to come to terms with the center's rules of conduct. Older adolescents come to the youth center discos regularly as part of their developing clubbing and party activities and networks, or show up occasionally.

Rooms are a scarce resource for park kids, who are in constant need of somewhere to go. Some rooms are open to kids by confessional religious groups. Neighborhood mosques often have such rooms:

A narrow staircase leads down to where the mosque youth room is: not very large, walls and carpeted floors are a drab brown. There are some leisure time activities (games, cards) and cheap drinks and tea available. There is one elderly man in charge who does not seem too interested. There are some girls and boys; the atmosphere is quiet and relaxed.



Apart from cold winter days, the mosque rooms are not very attractive to the kids, where both girls and boys can come. Some boy groups say that they go to the mosque to play cards, but also to pray and just hang out. Increasing religious involvement sometimes takes an adolescent away from the park. But more often the kids get tired of the strict mosque rules and stop going there.

A Catholic Church offered a cool party location in a basement in the 5<sup>th</sup> District. Adolescents' use was almost unrestricted, and some hot parties went down, organized by the park kids themselves. After some months, however, the person in charge was transferred, and the location's party times were over.

Institutional rooms such as this one serve a variety of developmental processes because they enable contact and interaction with other adolescents, adolescent groups, and grown-ups in a partially supervised setting.

But there are still long hours when youth centers and other rooms are not available – so back to the park. Mobile and park youth work on district level – which has made this study possible - aims at establishing a communication bridge with those groups who prefer parks and other public spaces as non-controlled and autonomous group meeting places alternative to institutional set-ups.

If the park kids are able to muster sufficient financial resources, commercial places in the neighborhood become an extension of park life. These places are betting shops and gambling arcades, local coffee shops, and, increasingly, certain internet cafés. All these places must be compatible with youth demands, and there are many which are either not attractive to young people due to their restrictions, or cannot be frequented by adolescents because they are for some reason not welcome.

Large shopping malls are main commercial hang-outs for adolescents (Millennium City 1200, Lugner City 1150, Gasometer 1110, Donauzentrum 1220), and attract kids from other districts as well. Thus malls are part of the “common urban places” rather than neighborhood places. (“Mall kids” are a special phenomenon of growing up in cities. But because they are not the subject of this study, shopping malls will be mentioned only briefly.)

### **C.II.1.2. Commercial Neighborhood Places**

#### **C.II.1.2.1. Win Or Lose ...**

I'm in the 5<sup>th</sup> District at a kebab and börek house run by a man from the Black Sea area. I meet Oe., now 17, from the former Eremit park, then Flusser park group. He tells me that he is in funded training to be a plumber. His twin brother Me. will become a bricklayer. – After finishing his dürüm, he crosses the street and enters the bet shop on the corner. Later that evening I see On., 19 years old, one of their group, enter as well. – Two months later at the same place, I see Oe., his brother Me., and their friend Vl. coming out of the same betting place (Summer 2009).

These encounters and observations show three things: first, Oe., Me., On., and Vl. – “the old gang”, a closed soccer cage group – are still together; second, they found municipally funded training and therefore now have some money; and third, they have taken to frequenting betting shops.

Betting and gambling shops and game arcades are almost exclusively frequented by male customers. The places are open to people from age 18, but the law is not strictly enforced. Consequently, a number of park adolescents have begun regularly going to these places. Schmidt (2006) observed this to be the case especially for Turkish/Anatolian boys. Not a few young men have debts resulting from betting and slot machines.

### **C.II.1.2.2. Neighborhood Cafés**

A neighborhood option for adolescents are cafés maintained by people with the group's – or one of the group's – vernacular, often owned by a relative. Some of these places attract mainly young people, but others are multi-generational. All such neighborhood cafés are becoming increasingly dominated by betting and gambling machines. The distinction between betting and gambling places and cafés has begun to dissolve.

Boys and young men with Anatolian background go to the *Kaffeehaus*. These places are often close to the park, and an important arena for, as Hannerz would call it, “growing up male”.

The Anatolian *Kaffeehaus* is a male-dominated neighborhood institution. It can be seen as a commercial living room where men come together to spend their leisure time. There are newspapers, card games, and two or more large television screens dominating the room with music videos, news, football, and commercials.

Young adolescent boys start going to the *Kaffeehaus* from around 14 or 15 years of age. They have a certain shyness at first, and go with an older or more experienced boy, or in groups. They play cards, and drink tea or sometimes beer. They avoid their fathers and older relatives, who in turn pretend not to see them. The young park groups will frequent several coffeehouses, eventually choosing one as a major meeting place.

An Anatolian café usually has a strong political and/or religious background. In the coffee house pairs or groups of young park boys grow into a larger social network through communication with the older men, experimenting with new roles.

Places which are often merely frequented by young males as well are the neighborhood cafés offering cheap access to virtual realities and the world wide net.

#### **C.II.1.2.2. Internet Cafés**

The internet cafés are important focal points in the neighborhood grid and give the park youth access to virtual realities. Increasingly many working class households have cheap computers and also internet access, but there are still many who do not. In some households with access, the data transfer rate is very slow, or the amount paid for is too quickly used up. The technical devices might be often broken, and repair is impossible or costly: instead, a new set will be bought at the next opportunity. But park adolescents probably prefer to go with their peers to the internet café anyway.

Internet cafés have opened at every corner in the old working-class district neighborhoods as well as along the Gürtel. Some of these places can be termed park youth places, virtually crawling with young people at times. Access is not restricted; there is almost no control; communication and games are cheap. Because of this atmosphere, few adult users are there; they frequent other places, sometimes just around the corner or down the street.

Many internet cafés close late. They are firmly rooted in 'neighborhood' surroundings and are often family-run businesses. Many of the shops also have telephone booths. The special rates (to Turkey, Africa, the Near or Far East, Arabic countries ...) reflect owners' and customers' backgrounds and communication needs.

Some neighborhood internet cafés, especially where it is possible to play Counter Strike, are almost exclusively frequented by boys.

### C.II.1.3. Park Adolescents' Internet Use

The main internet uses by the adolescents in internet cafés of poor neighborhoods are interactive games:

„Ich komme am Nachmittag in den Park und ich treffe mich mit meinen Freunden und dann gehen wir Counter Strike spielen.“ (“I come to the park in the afternoon, meet my friends, and then we go to play Counter Strike.”) (Verein Wr. Jugendzentren, Parkgeschichten 2006:15).

Counter Strike has been the by far most popular interactive computer game. It can be played by up to 8 players who assemble in the internet café.

9 pm at the “Cash and Star” in a poorer high street in the 18<sup>th</sup> District. There are around 10 younger boys. Most do not have broken voices yet; one cannot be older than 7 yrs. There are some young adults in the back room. All are playing CS. With much mutual support and a lot of discussions, they get involved in the game quite quickly. „Welchen Namen nimmst du?“ (“what do you call yourself?”)–„Die sind fast tot“ (“they’re almost dead.”)–„Warte, ich mach mehr Spieler“ (“Wait, I make more players”)–„Wir verlieren eh“ (“we’ll lose anyway”)–„Wie hast du gemacht?“ (“how did you do [that]?”)–„Wo bist du heast?“ (“where are you listen?”)–„Was machst du dort Oida?“ (“what are you doing there old chap?”). (Communication in German, August 2009).

The lay-out of *Counter Strike* shows run-down post-urban surroundings: grey concrete walls, partially overgrown industrial complexes, and derelict military bases, garages, and hangars. The game is about terrorists and an anti-terrorists police unit, and the walls bear graffiti in Arabic script.

The player moves behind his gun. “He, jetzt hast du mich erschossen, du Idiot!” (“Hey, now

you shot me dead, you idiot!") Cash and Star, August 2009.

Interactive digital games can be understood as the imagined side of 'real' war<sup>73</sup>. Internet uses connected to war – to real war, as of Grosny in ruins, of Bosnia, of Iraq; and to interactive games simulating war like Counter Strike – must surely be made subject to further study.

I meet Ys., 17, in the restricted-access back-room of an internet café in the 5th District; while the others are playing interactive games outside, he sits smoking and downloading US-American gangsta rap music clips – he manages this despite his illiteracy. He likes the weapons, the violence, the cool attire. In fact, this is not much different from his own life. His violence has already gotten him thrown into jail several times (July 2007).

The internet has become the main source of information for park adolescents. Information is sought on music, sex, and war. Pictures/images and videos are particularly looked for.

Youth worker and DJ Dirk (van) Elst observed that kids who come to youth centers (many of them from park backgrounds) have difficulties with Google and other text-based search engines: their searches often fail because of their misspellings. And if their search does succeed, the overwhelming selection of websites and information is difficult for them to sort through: they cannot locate the websites which have the information they want, nor can they know which websites they should trust. (Conversation August 2009).

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<sup>73</sup> See also Peggy Trawick's contribution on Cyberkids; she cites the posting of a Total Annihilation (a game) addict as follows: „Can't we fight real world wars on computer games? ... Less bloody, same concept." (2007:210).

Therefore park children and adolescents cannot, and do not, make much use of text-based information in this huge global memory and history storage system.

It is different for pictures and images. You-Tube is presently the main platform for non-profit uploaded videos. Homemade productions are easily published on it. People (using pseudonyms) upload whole movies, often filmed from cinema screens with mobile phones.

The videos currently most often sought out and watched by park adolescents are those of spectacular accidents, then music clips and their do-it-yourself rip-offs, videos of fights and other violent incidents (often in former homelands), curiosities of all sorts, and pornography. Young HipHoppers engage in virtual rapping battles and dissing sessions via You-Tube, while videos of Chechen Mudjaheddin are very prominent among male refugee adolescents.

Further uses following youth worker Dirk Elst are chatrooms which are frequented both by girls and boys: sometimes mobile phone numbers are exchanged. Eventually the boy and girl meet face to face. E-Bay is used predominantly for checking out cars and motorcycles. Much liked is the downloading of screen savers and screen backgrounds, mostly nationalist symbols and flags.

In the internet cafés I observed that pairs of male friends, or groups, go into a flirt chatroom with a girl, and make fun of her responses. (It is not clear if the girl also was with her friends.)

Instant messenger systems are important for the all-Viennese exchange among adolescents, which are used daily and sometimes hourly to contact others and arrange meetings with friends. Instant messenger services are used for contact with friends and family, both abroad and in the next internet café.

A recent development is, as youth worker Dirk Elst experiences, that increasingly many youths are on Facebook: he keeps receiving invitations by numerous kids who he worked with in various youth centers. (Conversation January 2010.)

Other uses are of course the internet telephone functions with or without camera for communicating with friends and relatives abroad; it is more a family realm and less clearly a specific park adolescents' internet use.

Many adolescents who frequent clubs and discos download pictures from clubbings (at *Volksgarten*, *Nachtwerk*, *Nachtschicht*, etc.).

The park adolescents in question are users only. They have no additional programming skills apart from those few who have had the opportunity (via youth support work) to produce their own homepages. Shared access and peer communication enables them to acquire new techniques and skills; but again, predominantly only in the user categories mentioned above.

Access to virtual rooms and spaces provides opportunities for meeting people, for sharing experiences and knowledge. This partially compensates for the general lack of physical space (both at home and in the urban surroundings) and social space (in society as such, including political participation). Virtual reality opens up new playgrounds of identity. E-Bay is turned into such a space as well: consumer fantasies for mobility are lived out, that is, having 'a car of one's own'.

Virtual communication of any sort strengthens the interaction among peers, friends, and relatives. The activities on and around the net are, from my observations of the adolescents in question, peer group activities. Whether playing Counter Strike, or looking up gangsta rap lyrics, or watching weird accidents on You-Tube, or going to a flirt chatroom – all



these activities involve the group who are watching, playing, communicating.

Last not least, via the interactive options of the world wide web the 'old' or 'classical' media (newspapers and TV) are by-passed and enable to share one's own posts/data/stories/experiences/images, making oneself globally visible and accessible to communication by postings.

The park adolescents' internet uses could be seen as options for dwelling in imagined realities and playgrounds of identity. What belongs to the neighborhood as well and is therefore discussed here – albeit connected to the family home – is television.

#### **C.II.1.4. Television**

At Cs.'s home, the TV is constantly turned on in the living room. His mother likes to watch the market programs: and indeed, it is not bad, the moderator encouraging people to estimate how many kilograms of oranges are in a bag. A little game for customers and market stall employees! Next: a commercial for a bridal shop, all from Vienna's 10<sup>th</sup> District. (May 2009).

At home, television sets are standard equipment and also dominant entertainment and socializing units. A TV constantly switched on brings a variety of messages and images into households. Parental TV use often includes satellite programs from, or about, homelands. Some commercial, advertisement, and entertainment programs are broadcast from markets and groceries in Vienna, with ethno-marketing being the obvious aspect<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> I'm grateful to Onur Serdar for this personal information (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009). Ethno-marketing on TV is available on satellite and cable and includes advertisements for textile and grocery shops, market and fast food stalls, restaurants, and locations for (life-cycle)

It is not uncommon for young people and even children to have their own sets. Ubiquitous supply with cheap information and technical equipment is part and parcel of working-class homes.

One special apparatus is the TV-connected Play Station or similar products. Some park kids grow up with it and go on playing far into adulthood<sup>75</sup>.

### **Example: Community TV and Park TV**

In Vienna, participatory community TV *okto* enables production and circulation of minority television: there are numerous programs in Turkish, Kurdish, Macedonian and Yugoslavian, as well as some in Asian and African languages.

Park-based adolescents from various districts produce youth-work supported Park TV:

Park TV interview: Q: "Wie lange bist du schon hier in diesem Park?" – A: Seit ich mich kenne!" ("How long have you been in this park?" – "Since I knew myself!") (Park TV, May 2009).

Numerous park kids have been, and continue to be, featured on Park TV and on CU TV, the monthly program produced by adolescents with the Verein Wiener Jugendzentren. This mediated version of park life on TV is

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family celebrations. The images and music used in these ads relate directly to the target groups' immigrant backgrounds and their memories of their youth, and of their homelands, and often feature Arabesk artists and music.

<sup>75</sup> Play Station features prominently in the lives of adult males in Hasaltay's short movie *Der Freund*.

youth and neighborhood television on which personal acquaintances, park friends, cousins, or oneself appear and form a special public.

### **C.II.2. The City at Large: Common Urban Space**

The park groups feel comfortable in their neighborhoods, but around them is the city at large. Some might not need to go into the common urban space, and some would rather stay put in the parks and cages. But other kids are attracted by the city and go there whenever they can. Some subsequently frequent both parks and common urban space; others by and by leave the parks entirely, and integrate into the larger urban crowds or “scenes”. This enlarging of one’s radius of physical and social action and knowledge is part of growing up.

New “urban” group meeting points are established in malls and cineplex centers. Others have a long history. An example of the latter is Reumannplatz in the 10<sup>th</sup> District, a focus for park-based adolescents mainly from Favoriten where a hundred kids and more often meet.

Kids also frequent outdoor swimming pools (the park groups from the 5<sup>th</sup> District went to the Erlaaer Bad, 1100, and the Simmeringer Bad, 1110), the Donauinsel with the Copa Cagrana (a youth-affine consumer zone along the river with numerous clubs and cafés); and the Prater (game halls, go-carts, autodrome).

#### **C.II.2.1. Shopping Malls and Cineplex Centers**

Park-based or park-socialized kids favor malls and multiplex cinemas, which are often included in such large shopping centers as the Millennium City, Lugner City, Gasometer, and Shopping City Süd. Many groups of adolescents besides the park groups go there, and people can meet and

get to know each other. These places belong to the adolescents' world; but, there tends to be a strong distinction between those admitted and those banned by security men for disruptive behavior.

The Seitstiegen group has celebrated! Somebody's birthday came up, and they all went to one of the restaurants in the shopping center Lugner City. It was quite cool, as Ja. told me. They liked it a lot and will go again. A good atmosphere was offered, and consumption was adequate; not cheap, but not expensive either. (Conversation 2005).

For the open Seitstiegenpark group with their growing experiences in urban spaces and commercial places, there were no problems encountered in using the shopping center as a leisure time facility.

### **C.II.2.2. Clubs and Discos**

Ae. sleeps long everyday, often until midday or afternoon. His mother is away at work until the evening, when he goes out to dance at clubs. He goes to alternative clubs, likes reggae and ragga, and has a critical world view. (Interview 2005).

The older Katzenpark groups very often meet in the evenings and at night at the park, before going out to the *Nachtwerk* or other clubs.

Se. is a well-liked chap among his peers in the Katzenpark, who he mainly hangs out with. He spends all his leisure time there with them. He has a girlfriend. Se. lives with his parents, and one brother who is 24. He gets up at 6 and goes to work. On free days he sleeps till noon, then goes to the park and in the evening to clubs like *Nachtwerk*, or to the Copa Cagrana on the Danube river.

Clubs and discos are important for adolescents. Some begin clubbing on their own, but most start going to clubs with their park group.

Many of the younger kids have their first experiences of sex and drugs in clubs. Their situations can change dramatically in a single evening with romance found or lost, by a first experience with drugs, by fights, or by new friends or enemies made.

The cellar-club *Jedinstvo* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District had its youth clubbings on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Many groups from the 5<sup>th</sup> District went regularly, one DJ'd there - he was also a DJ at the youth center. His girlfriend, aged 13, went to every clubbing. We also met very young kids, 9 or 10 years old. Older guys who are security men guard the door because there are a lot of fights, some involving knives - especially outside with people who have been prevented from entering or who were thrown out. (Observations from 1997 to 2001).

Clubs where young people go to are in constant change, closing, re-opening, going in and out of fashion. Clubs are either mixed, basically open to all who 'know how to behave' (indicated by outfit and style), or 'closed' in the sense of having racist club policies ("Austrian whites only") or strong ethnic flavor ('Serbian', Turkish', etc.).

One night out at the *Nachtwerk*: We make the rounds on the huge, flood-lighted parking lot, showing off our ancient yolk-yellow Ford Granada. Hey, there's Dm., aged 16, from the 20<sup>th</sup> District, with a girl on each arm! He notices us - the car! - and acknowledges us with a wink. He passes the huge bouncers at the doors and vanishes inside. We follow, into the enormous cylindrical hall, which is surrounded by several balconies where one can look down onto the dance floor and the elevated DJ fittings. Numerous golden cages are scattered around the dance floor, dancers inside, moving smoothly. Later, in a separate small café down the hall, people dance *kolo* (a line dance) while women strip in booths along the walls. A special feature is the famous Money Rain in the

huge disco: real bills rain down on the dancers. (1999).

The *Nachtwerk* and other places which cater to transnational and global musical tastes (*Bodrum Nights*, oriental parties, *Balkan Fever*, Balkan nights, the *Club Ost*, R'n Besk clubbings at the *U4*, etc.) have a tendency to develop into mixed and open 'urban' spaces, dominated by people with shared immigration backgrounds, and some become popular with people from a majority background.

There are many of these places in the city center. Admittance to these clubs – apart from the necessary money - is contingent upon style of dress and good behavior.

The Seitstiegen group started going out to the fancy club *Volksgarten* when they were around 15 or 16 years old. Their night was Friday, when a mixed crowd from all over Vienna and from all possible backgrounds gathered to celebrate a night full of modern R'n'B and HipHop.

Access is often denied to the "lower strata" of urban adolescents who are "ethnicised" based on the club owners' experiences with violent groups, but access is also sometimes denied due to outright discrimination. Many male teenagers' court appearances and even jail sentences are the result of violent "meetings" in or outside clubs.

We attend the group trial of five refugee adolescents. They robbed kids in parks, taking away mobile phones, watches and money, then expanded their range of operations to other city places. They started a huge fight outside a club in Vienna's First District during a New Years Eve party, when they tried to rob groups of clubbers. Only a few of the victims attended the trial: some kids from parks whom we know, we recognize the names – in fact, kids from the Seitstiegen group, who had mentioned the incident to us. (June 2007).

Closed groups, cage groups, and incipient gangs are often denied entry to clubs, and react with what they know: violent physical behavior, going back for revenge to where they were rejected. But these groups also, lacking access to the good clubs (where the “good” girls go), stay closer to “home”, stay local, in their home districts, in their neighborhood park and cage. Some frequent less ‘posh’ places.

Many such clubs are in working-class neighborhoods, on Favoritenstrasse, Ottakringer Strasse, Märzstrasse etc. In these smaller places the rules of conduct are less strict than in centrally located clubs, and have publics which tend to be rougher. Some places are outright drug localities, with their special profiles (see the chapter on drugs), others offer concerts and singers on stage.

Clubs and discos are main places for initiations: fragmented and self initiations, evolving from contact and, for some, conflict with adults (club owners, other visitors, bouncers, waiters and waitresses, musicians). Clubs hold a lot more options for experiences and experimenting with one’s roles than the parks.

### **C.II.2.3. Favored Youth Places**

Me.’s arm is in a plaster cast. It is hottest July. How did this happen? He had a violent encounter with someone in the Laaberg Bad (open-air swimming pool in the 10<sup>th</sup> District). (2007).

Certain outdoor swimming pools are working-class youth places. There, closed groups from different backgrounds and districts come into often violent contact.

A largely uncontrolled area where closed groups often go, especially if on truancy or after being (temporarily) expelled from school, is the

Prater. This huge park with its associated carnaval grounds offers practically unlimited recreational opportunity, but also opportunities for violent encounters with other groups, and illegitimate activities. My data do not contain personal observations concerning the Prater, only stories told by the kids.

To conclude: Learning the ways of the city is part of growing up in urban surroundings. For park groups this consists mainly in getting to know the retail areas and consumption spaces (see Chapter "Bodies"), clubs and discos. This expansion of awareness sometimes begins when the youth is only 9 or 10 years of age and takes place over the course of several years. Closed cage groups, however, are more attracted to uncontrolled areas and are likely to get into violent encounters and illegitimate activities.

For the park kids the financial resources to join in the consumer society comes mainly from their own money earned by essentially physical labor. Admittance to the work force is itself directly connected to a certain look, style, and, of course, conduct.

### **C.II.3. Work, Jobs, Wage Labor**

The driver announces my stop: Pilgramgasse. Something in his voice seems familiar. I get out and look into the cab: Hassan! He instantly recognizes me though it must be 15 years since we've seen each other. He gets out and we shake hands. He says, "Ja, es ist alles gut geworden" ("Yes, everything has turned out well.") (2006).



### **C.II.3.1. General Situation**

Changing economic and political circumstances strongly influence the job market for adolescents. A worsening economy affects the park kids especially, because they are the most vulnerable in terms of education, class background, family support, social skills, and also language use.

Talking about their jobs and work was not easy since there is a lot of frustration to be found there. Either people were lucky to find a job at last – after long months of seeking – or they have lost a job somehow, which they regret, or they are still looking for one but don't really know how it will turn out. One way or another they all know that they are in a very precarious situation, and that failure in that respect threatens them and their present life, as well as the future life which seems increasingly not controllable. (Resumée from the interviews 2005.)

Park kids I have known through the decades have found and lost jobs in the city services (subway, busdriver, garbage, offices, gardening); skilled, low skilled, unskilled jobs, in family enterprises, in the service sector, and in the informal ('black') sector. Some make money from 'jobs' doing strictly illegal activities. Kids have found and lost apprenticeships in the dual system of training and schooling. Careers have been made – or at least started - in sports and in music.

Temporary jobs for adolescents are in advertising campaigns, fundraising for institutions (WWF etc.), and peddling life insurance or financial investments. Most of these temporary jobs are strenuous, low-income, and without social security. And usually they require social skills. Often, friends and families are the kids' target groups as they peddle investments and insurance. This is very often the case in immigrant circles.

Su. works as a cocktail mixer in a hotel. He starts work at 4 p.m., going there by bike. He

has some days off, but, as he says, irregularly and on short notice only. His previous job had been breakfast preparation in a hotel, where he started at 4 in the morning, cutting fruit. (Interview 2005).

Adolescents' jobs are often precarious, at the margins of society and the city. Such jobs are frequently very early or very late, with very short or very long working hours, and very far away from the adolescent's place of residence. There is much irregular work in the 'black' economy, in mobile phone and internet shops and in services like security and club dancing. Many unskilled jobs are in the food industry (either production or sale), and clothing (as unskilled salespersons). The adolescents are likely to often lose jobs, and change them often:

Cs. was laid off after having worked at the large supermarket for much of his 17<sup>th</sup> year. He had been responsible for the sweets and chocolate rack but got transferred to the freezer storage room (minus 20 degrees). After becoming ill and having some disputes with his boss, he lost the job. He had just turned 18. He now is increasingly often "standing in the park" with his peers. (May 2009).

The decreasing demand for no- and low-skilled work *in production* – something the park boys, young, strong, eager, would rather like – reduces their options and many adolescents simply stay in the park, drifting in and out of unemployment offices, funded training, and temporary jobs.

In the informal sector wages are often unpaid. It is also notorious for its health risks, bad hours (very late or very early hours; long hours; or work on short notice), and heavy labor. "The list of precarious jobs is endless and constantly growing" (*Back on Stage* annual report 2006). The go-go dancers and "bouncers" in night-clubs are in this class of work.

Increasingly often a whole family is un- or under-employed. Adolescents thus react under pressure and accept the first work that is on offer, however precarious.

Park youths tend to lack basic literacy and math skills. Reading is not a favorite pastime with them and often mocked by peers<sup>76</sup>. Basic social skills (greeting, listening, introducing, politeness) also are often not very well developed. All this, coupled with poverty and social stigmata towards their parents, families, and themselves, do not help them find jobs.

### **C.II.3.2. Dual Education System and Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeship in the “dual education system”, unique to the German speaking countries, is an integral part of the social welfare state, and was developed in the 1960s and 1970s as the *Glanzstück* (“masterpiece”) of an interwoven education system and labor market. Oehme/Beran/Krisch describe it thus:

The dual education system is a combination of practical learning in an often private company – apprenticeship –, and school education in the *Berufsschule*. The main idea of this company-connected dual education system is to interweave the practical education in the company with schooling ... one day at *Berufsschule* alternating with four days at work (Oehme/Beran/Krisch 2007:59; transl. by DM).

This system is aimed at providing not a humanistic but the vocational-technical education needed for the labor market (Oehme/Beran/Krisch 2007:61). This was related to the industrial labor society, regulated by the

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<sup>76</sup> Ana: „Manchmal tu ich auch ein Buch lesen, hihi, oh das ist peinlich.“ Q.: „Das ist peinlich?“ – Ana: „Ja!“ – Q.: „Wieso?“ – Ana: „Mich hat mal eine Freundin ausgelacht, weil ich ein Buch gelesen hab.“ (“Sometimes I do read a book, hihi, that’s embarrassing”. – “That is embarrassing?” – “Yes!” – “Why?” – “A friend once made fun of me because I read a book.”) (in Schindlauer 2008:45).

social welfare state with full employment. "[T]he structural change of the labor society deeply affects the adolescents' and young adults' transition into work" (2007:63, transl. by DM). I cannot go into details here, but the park adolescents' experiences do show some of these fragmented transitional processes.

Ke. had been looking for an apprenticeship after finishing school for months, and had almost given up trying. However, he also gave up his first apprenticeship as a cook: "Ich habe eine Kochlehre angefangen, eineinhalb Monate. Die Zeiten haben mich aber gestört, ich bereue es jetzt." ("I started an apprenticeship as a cook, but quit because of the working hours. Now I regret it.") (Interview 2005).

Adolescents after *Hauptschule* (high school up to 14 years) and *Polytechnikum* (the additional school year to 15, legal working age) spend months, often years searching for an apprenticeship. If it materializes at all, there is no chance to find out if it was the right choice.

De., 17, says that she finished school with good marks three years ago. After a rather difficult time of job-seeking, she finally found an apprenticeship in flower-trading, but got laid off last December. She also says that since then she has been often ill. But she will start her new career as an apprentice in 'gastro-economy' and she looks forward to that! (Interview 2005).

The adolescents no longer have much choice over the professions for which these apprenticeships are the preparation. Most jobs are in the service sector anyway, and the ambitions some youths had to become a car mechanic, or a metal worker, or at least to work at something to do with cars, or motors, machines (boys, and some girls) have more or less vanished.

On the subway, again. I meet Sb., haven't seen her for some time. She is pale and looks tired.

I ask how she is, what does she do? She has a new job: salesperson in a bakery quite far away from where she lives. Why did she leave the other job, an apprenticeship? She seemed rather to like it there, a café close to her home, nice team? The boss fired her, wrongly accusing her of having stolen money from the cashier. (2006).

Part of the erosion of the dual system (apprenticeship with schooling) includes that apprenticeship contracts have become less secure. Firms, especially small ones, frequently take on an apprentice and soon fire him/her, and then hire the next young person. Because finding such contracts usually takes a very long time, it is discouraging for the adolescent to face such disappointments.

Without a positive *Hauptschulabschluss* (passing marks in high school finals), the chances of finding one of the much-coveted apprenticeships is low. Many of the park kids are in this position, and they depend on low- or non-skilled work. A temporary but socially stigmatized option is publicly-funded training.

### **C.II.3.3. Funded Training**

Se. has already lost four rather well-paid jobs although he is only 18. He does not want to talk about that. It seems very frustrating. Presently he is in a course financed by the city council, where he is supposed to learn car mechanics. But he says it is just a fake teacher and a fake job. They don't give him much money, 150 per month, and the cars are just for practicing, there are no real customers. But he acknowledges that they have given him a chance. He often hates getting up in the morning, but "gute und schlechte Zeiten hat jeder Mensch" ("everybody has good and bad times.") (Interview 2005).

Many unemployed adolescents are in funded training where they may learn a vocation like plumber, mason, or carpenter. But after training they have to find a “real” job, which can be very difficult. As a result, motivation in these courses is quite low. And, because of the strict regulations, park kids tend to drop out again – which further marginalizes and isolates these “problem kids”, cutting them off even more from mainstream society’s communication and information – not the way to turn them into “solution kids”.

Oehme/Beran/Krisch speak of the *Drehtüreffekt*, the “revolving door effect”: for each adolescent who enters the work force, another exits into unemployment (2007:80).

Lack of opportunity, a precarious life situation, and poor prospects for participation in society can make the world of illegal activities seem attractive to a youth. For the kids in the parks and cages, the people in criminal or half-legal businesses may become idols. A youngster’s bad reputation will attract a recruiter for organized and semi-organized crime, and can bring a boy and his group into business very quickly. And after unpleasant experiences with the labor market – as in some ‘crummy’ job with strangers, who are sometimes mean, and sometimes untrustworthy people, can make crime and its bosses look not too bad in a kid’s eyes.

#### **C.II.3.4. Special Circumstances for Some Girls**

There are, for some girls, special circumstances. They tend to vanish from the job market quicker than boys. After finishing school, they do not frequent the extremely crowded Job Centers. They would rather stay at home and help around the house, where some families depend on their work; and therefore do not look for vocational training, or give up the search after a short time.

They are obviously under less pressure from their families to find a job, and there are no “incentives” as for boys. (Sl., for example, was promised the driver’s license if he found himself an apprenticeship.)

Some girls’ future prospects are not connected to their own job, work, career, but rather to those of their (male) partner or future husband. They may want a job for a limited time, and their ambitions in this area are rather conventional: most want to be a hairdresser or beautician, and many take jobs as salespersons<sup>77</sup>. Some marry quite young, at around 16, and some are already divorced by age 17. Young wives sometimes have to support the family while their spouse is in jail.

### **C.II.3.5. Work in Small Family-Run Enterprises**

A new job area for adolescents has been opening up in recent years: work in their family’s small business enterprise. The jobs involve mainly unskilled work in cafés and groceries, butcher shops, bakeries, market stalls, hairdressers, clothing manufactures, and cleaning firms. Many of these shops are situated in the family’s neighborhood.

Me., 17, refugee boy from Iraq, has spent some months in jail after being busted for several offences including drugs. He and four of his friends were convicted. After he was released, he suffered another period of hard drug addiction. He came to the park only infrequently to meet his old peers, and to play ball, soccer or basketball. One day he tells us that he now works with his stepfather, who has a small grocery. During Moharram the shop is quite busy. (2006).

We meet Mi. in the Geheimpark. He is 21 and has his own firm, a cleaning company. I remember

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<sup>77</sup> See also Pichler (2000) on gendered job wishes and profiles.

that Mi.'s father had thrown a big party for him when he turned 13. He seems to be some big shot, someone special, with a chief-like position in his family. (2007).

Sk., 17 years old, has been looking for a job for a long time. His father owns a neighborhood café, which Sk. claims to have managed during the father's absence. He has, he says, supervised the waiters and was in charge of the cash. When he found jobs, even apprenticeships, as a waiter, he soon left or was thrown out. (2004).

Work in their families' shops and enterprises brings a new, middle-class and profit-oriented outlook to the youth. Success in school and command of the German language are not necessary for such work. The parents' self-sufficient attitude – "Look at us: we don't have an education, but we still can make money" – is absorbed by the young<sup>78</sup>.

Of course, many parents who became successful business people motivate their offspring to go into higher education and university. There are many such kids who would not be seen in the parks, but hang out with their peers, often at home over computers and video games.

### **C.II.3.6. Imaginary Homelands and New Destinies**

Cs.: „Ja, wir haben ihn lange nicht gesehen, er war in der Türkei, seine Eltern wollten das, die haben gesehen, hier das schaut schlecht aus, das wird nix. Er ist nur herumgehängt, hat keine Arbeit gefunden. Die haben dort ein Geschäft ... aber es hat nicht geklappt, er ist jetzt wieder da.“ ("Yes, we have not seen him for a long time, he's been in Turkey. His parents wanted him to go. They saw that it did

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<sup>78</sup> I am grateful to my long-term youth work colleague Senol Akkilic for these observations and background information.



not look good here, this is not going to work out. He only hung out, did not find a job. They have a shop there ... but it did not work out, he is back in the park now.") (Conversation 2009.)

A new development for adolescents from immigrant backgrounds is remigration to the parents' country of origin. It is often the parents', but sometimes the adolescents, wish to "go back home". The new middle classes are making money as entrepreneurs and invest the money "back home". Their children, especially sons, hope for a future in their land of origin, believing that they can simply go back there and live off this money. In some cases, the parents have built a house with shop facilities back in the home country. With prospects in Vienna on the wane, illusions of a 'Shangri-La' are on the rise. The adolescents become oriented towards homelands which are imaginary. Their hopes to return are seldom realized as they imagined beforehand, but encourage a detachment from Austrian society, including a loss of interest in the political processes of Vienna.

Another possibility for some youth is further migration following family members and relatives to new destinations.

Mh., Ja.'s younger brother from the Seitstiegen group, returned to Vienna! He has been living with his relatives in Texas for two years. He worked in their mobile phone shop. Everything went all right: in his leisure time he played poker with his cousins and cruised around in cars. With his money he bought a Ford Thunderbird and had it shipped to Europe. The expenses of the car have ruined him. He cannot find anybody to sell the car to! He is very unhappy. „Alles ist schief gelaufen". ("Everything went wrong.") (2006).

XX. tells us that he is going to join his father in Germany who will give him money and a job. However, after some time he is back at the park, but has been avoiding us. The girl he has married in the meantime is also an old acquaintance of ours: she started doing hard

drugs at 13. Now they are grown up, living together in a social flat.

Thus some kids follow relatives to new destinations: to the US (as in the cases of Mh. and also Ra., who were both born in Karachi), or to Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, or elsewhere. Some adolescents stay abroad. Others return to Vienna – and to the park, to the peer group – to the old gang.

### **C.II.3.7. Job Troubles**

I phone Sf. He cannot speak now: he is in a car with a new boss and they are going to Burgenland to work. It is a trial job for Sf. Some time later I call him again. Now he is standing on the road in the middle of nowhere! He had started to quarrel with the boss-to-be, who stopped the car and threw him out. He has no idea where he is – I tell him to ask people, but there are none around. I say to ring somebody's door, but there are no houses either. He keeps walking, and finally finds a house with somebody home. They explain the way to the train station so that he can get back to Vienna. Later I meet him and his peers in the Weichmann park cage. (Summer 2006).

Sf. was quite bitter after this experience. It was only many months later that he eventually found employment as a helping hand in the warehouse of a food production company, with which he was very happy because even menial jobs are hard to come by, especially for those without basic skills.

Km., park boy from Eremit park, finished the special pedagogic center with difficulties. Being a dedicated soccer player, his days in the cage seemed never-ending, yet he stayed

away over time. One day I meet him: "Where are you, *moruk*<sup>79</sup>"? He found a job in the warehouse of a furniture production firm – and even better, his best friend works there too! They have a great time. (2006).

A problem adolescents sometimes have with jobs in mainstream society is the isolation from their peers – something not known in the old factory days when one went to work together with one's friends. The park kids long to be together with peers and friends. But they must leave their group – which gives them support and security – and go into "enemy territory" where bosses and mean colleagues treat them badly. If problems at work arise, the way back into the group is easy and natural. It can even be connected with a kind of victorious feeling, especially if the youngster got kicked out after standing up to an older colleague. These experiences make great stories on the park benches<sup>80</sup>.

With increasing unemployment, "leisure" time activities in the parks and cages might be prolonged far into adulthood.

The focus on work and money begins during school through job counselling and information. After school ends, the job-seeking period can be prolonged especially for those without successful school marks. Feelings of insecurity and dependency increase, and the shortage of jobs results in worry.

Ja., 18, moved away from the district some time ago and now lives with his younger sisters and his parents in Vienna's outskirts, in a nicer

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<sup>79</sup> The Turkish term *moruk* is *Oida* in Viennese; both terms mean 'old chap' and are very frequently used in friendship contexts.

<sup>80</sup> Both Liebow and Hannerz mention such behavior, not from park benches but from the famous streetcorners: "The streetcorner is...a sanctuary... where failures are rationalized into phantom successes and weaknesses magically transformed into strengths." (Liebow 2003:139). Hannerz speaks of "collective streetcorner mythmaking [which] can at least momentarily ease the burden." (Hannerz 2004:117).

area and better flat. Ja. got an apprenticeship as a salesman recently, after a very long period of job-seeking. He is soft-spoken and friendly. He loves Indian food, Hindi Movies, Indian music, and HipHop. He still comes to the Seitstiegen park where he used to spend most of his early adolescent years; just like then, he meets his friends there, they play some basketball and chat, talk to the new park users. (Interview 2005).

When people succeed finally in finding an apprenticeship after a long and seemingly never-ending period of seeking, they begin spending less time in the parks, perhaps coming in the evenings after work to meet with the others. Group members often still meet regularly, though, and even if no longer living in the area come to the park now and then. Other meeting places, however, are also established, such as special club nights. But jobs and apprenticeships are not very stable, and fragmentation of biographies is the rule.

In spite of all good auguries, Ja. lost his apprenticeship as a salesperson. How do I know? Because he turned up at our office again, after many months. It is always nice to see the kids again – but these circumstances are very sad, yet increasingly frequent: Ke., Yu., Il., Ae., De., now Ja. ...

The times of unemployment – when the revolving door expels the kids again – are times when people see more of each other again.

Se., 18, is in a course funded by the city council where he is supposed to be trained as a car mechanic. He is a well-liked chap among his Katzenpark peers who he still mainly hangs out with: he spends all his leisure time there with them. – “How are you?” – “Right now, I’m good, I’m with my friends.” But he says, on other days he would give a different answer: “Es geht mir Scheisse, lass mich in Ruhe.” (“I’m fucking bad, leave me alone”.) (Interview 2005).

Fragmentation of biographies and failure on the job front frequently occur to those who cannot easily muster the ‘adaptive skills’ for a job. It is very hard to judge from the stories if the mistake was the employer’s or the park kid’s. Failures are often retold as success stories, even as a resistance against injustice and oppression. But employers’ tolerance is low, and many other kids are waiting for a chance to get the job.

The predominant feeling adolescents must come to terms with, often since their childhood days, is the feeling that they are not needed.

It is also quite clear that job opportunities in a close, neighborhood realm – which include transnational community structures such as family based enterprises and imaginary homelands – are attractive. It is simply a way of growing up in youth-adequate conditions, and holds the major promise to the adolescent of integrating both the park *and* work universes and for making the youth feel useful.

#### **C.II.3.8. Youth in the Music Business**

The huge domain of popular music is business, profession, money, production, and entertainment all rolled into one. Youth culture connected to a special music might serve as an entry ticket into this scene for some park kids.

Some park adolescents have indeed gained access to the music business, especially young Roma musicians with “Balkan” and “oriental” style music; and also some older “gangster and hood” rappers. Others have moved into the new opportunities of music clubs and entertainment places established by ‘ethnic’ entrepreneurs, and work as DJs, or with security, or in food service, or as (go-go) dancers. All these developments are part of the new Viennese society, though still in marginalized sectors of it.

I will give some examples of park youths who have entered the music business, or at least earn some money, as musicians.

Several kids from the park crowd started DJing in youth centers, playing charts R'n'B and HipHop to the other teenagers there. They then moved on to “ethnic” clubs, like the Serbian *Jedinstvo* (also for very young teenagers), the large club *Nachtwerk* (for older adolescents and adults with its money-shower, parking-lot and striptease), the increasingly numerous Turkish clubs and Bodrum nights, and any number of ‘oriental-style’ discos. The latter are a rapidly developing scene fostered by, and further encouraging, the cultural and economic diversification of the migrant populations, with their new middle classes, through entrepreneurship<sup>81</sup>.

Adrian Gaspar, 18, has formed an orchestra from his Musik-Gymnasium school colleagues – who are all well-trained and striving at a professional career in classical music –, and from friends who are Macedonian Roma based at Katzenpark. The approximately 50 musicians play a variety of music in a very professional and lively way: it might be described as a Balkan Big Band sound combined with Bossa Nova, Tango, Jazz, Classical, and Rock. The park-based musicians learned their instruments on their own or from relatives. Er.’s father is a professional clarinet player, who trained him. Er. has played at park parties with his friends since 1999. They called themselves “Die kleinen Talente” (“The Little Talents”). (Interview 2006)<sup>82</sup>.

Many park kids want to become musicians. A career as a musician becomes even more attractive as chances to find a ‘regular’ job decline. It

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<sup>81</sup> See also the contributions in Gebesmair, Andreas (ed) (2009), *Randzonen der Kreativwirtschaft. Türkische, chinesische und südasiatische Kulturunternehmen in Wien*. Wien: Lit Verlag.

<sup>82</sup> Adrian Gaspar Orchestra concert, opening night of the Balkan Fever Festival, April 21, 2006.

seems, and most probably is, a lot easier to become a singer or musician than to attend high school.

Su. came from Sri Lanka with his father as a 12 year-old. His grandfather was a famous musician in Sri Lanka. He found friends in the Seitstiegen park, and they later formed a breakdance crew (the Bionic B-Boys). Their approach to life is an open one, their park group sharing both an open view and economic pressure. Su. plays with his father in a Reggae band in Austria: Su. is a drummer. Reggae is also famous in Sri Lanka in tourist villages like Hikkaduwa. For some time now, the band's success has seemed to grow, and Su. goes on tour with it: they have been to Canada, Paris, Italy, and all over Austria, playing at Reggae festivals and large parties. Not much money comes in, though, and Su. financially depends on additional jobs. His jobs are temporary because he needs to leave work if the band has a gig somewhere and he does not want either to miss the concert, or leave the band (2007).

The profession of musician is often inherited. The children's music training is not usually in music schools or from tutors, but by the parent(s) themselves, who pass their musical traditions on to the children.

Some adolescents are trained and proto-professional musicians (clarinet, drums, keyboards, saz), who earn money playing at their community's life-cycle festivities such as hennah nights, weddings, and circumcision parties.

For the kids, these musical engagements close the gap between their background and economic needs. Their musical approaches are largely situated in global popular cultural realms, and their families' in a transnational context. Music can be a way of side-stepping the majority society and the economic problems associated with it by the kids.

The final ethnographic chapters will deal with the adolescents in their families and park adolescents at school.

## **C.II.4. Park Kids in their Families**

### **C.II.4.1. Park Kids at Home**

Studies of migration, and of families in migration, deal with urban adaptation and urbanization processes, and more. A separate contact needs to be established by the researcher with the adolescent family members. Young people have opinions differing from their families, but might not express them openly, just with their peers. They sometimes meet other people in secret. They often try to keep from their families where they go to, and what they do. For the researcher, building up a trusting relationship with the adolescents includes the assurance of keeping these secrets from their families.

As the adolescents' home life is not easy to observe, I will use information provided by the kids themselves during interviews in 2003 and 2005. Family problems and conflicts were frequently discussed among the youth in the parks. I also personally met, both in case work and informally, several parents and other family members of the park kids.

There is (except for one boy who leaves home often) no desire to run away from the family: all interviewed park kids are happy to be with their families. The topic of moving out is considered by two kids of majority background who wait for their communal flat. This indicates obviously well-working family units despite all the economic pressures and stresses. (Interviews 2005).

De. is 17. She lives with her mother and three younger brothers and sisters of whom she is in charge very often. Her Turkish father long ago



vanished and she never knew him. The younger children are by other fathers: the boys (now 12 and 13) have a Muslim father from Yugoslavia, who left 6 years ago. The smallest child's father sometimes takes De. to soccer games: they are both *Austria* fans. He says, joking with his peers at the pitch, that she is his daughter. - She says taking care of her younger siblings has added to her grown-up and her self-reliant personality. (Interview 2005).

But adolescents also sometimes try to avoid their parents, especially if unemployed which usually leads to conflicts. If possible, they like to sleep late in the morning or even till afternoon - or at least until the parents have gone. Then they meet their peers in the cages and parks or in the betting shops and internet cafés, not returning home until late in the evening when they watch TV over a late dinner by themselves. This is a way to create their own space. Others suffer from different problems:

January early evening - I visit Su. and his father in their apartment which they are going to give up - the rent is too high. They don't know yet where they will find a place to stay, funds are very short because the father is ill at present and cannot work. Su. has not obtained his Austrian citizenship yet and has difficulties finding work. The father, however, has prepared a traditional Christmas crib for his son, and he fries up some sausages and eggs for us. Upon leaving, he jokes, "Now you had breakfast in the evening". (2005).

The adolescent park and cage kids' families range from single unemployed parents to rather affluent entrepreneurs. The diversification of the migrant communities along lines of politics, financial status and religion are important influences on the adolescents' attitudes and therefore on their interactions with their peers. A family's economic standing and its political and religious views are reflected in the adolescents' lives, values, and expectations for the future.

I'm speaking with Ke. about his family home in Vienna. He says, that some "türkisches Zeugs steht herum" (Turkish stuff is about), but no religious symbols and no prayer rug. The food his parents cook is generally, but not exclusively, Turkish. Family visits are made during the major festivals Kurban Bayram and Seker Bayram. (2003).

#### **C.II.4.2. Transnationality**

Many migrants obtain Austrian citizenship, which is granted according to length of stay and proven good conduct. The emigrant families' economic circumstances in Vienna also were felt back in the home countries and villages. In the former home countries, their families' economic situation and status change as class structures in the villages are transformed. As kin groups and communities in Vienna became larger, life-cycle festivities have increasingly been celebrated not in the villages 'back home', but in Vienna. (Mayer 1994).

Post-industrial and global economic changes affect both Austria, as an immigration-receiving country, and the former homelands as the sending countries. Some immigrant families here face unemployment and a worsening economic situation and this often results in family dissolution and the rupture of connections with "back home". But others have formed new middle classes of transnational entrepreneurs, mainly in food, and clothing, cleaning, and small-shop merchandising, and transnational connections to the former home country for the purposes of import are economically important for some families and increase the back-home families' economies as well.

#### **C.II.4.3. Political Attitudes and Homeland Politics**

The political attitudes of families must be seen in relation to the politics of their (former) homeland. During the past three decades the main political problems in Turkey have been the military coups and the suppression of the 1970s liberation movements, and in former Yugoslavia the transformation to post-socialism and the on-going war. Divisions among immigrant groups mainly occur or persist along political or religious antagonistic positions deriving from homeland conflicts.

Families as social units face many concerns involving their members' daily lives as well as the individual family's relationship to other immigrant groups. Homeland politics form one important area of interest, and information is sought from newspapers, satellite television programs, and communication with friends and relatives. News are exchanged by telephone, via internet, and in cafés, barber shops, and at work. Austrian politics are likely to enter people's lives via such everyday concerns as work permits, unemployment, problems at work, visa restrictions, new laws restricting immigration or relatives' visits to Austria, and so on. But homeland politics are more ardently discussed than Austrian politics. Discussions of political questions and topics sometimes result in family quarrels and even fission of families.

#### **C.II.4.4. The Adolescents' Approach**

Some people of the second or third generation after labor migration do not want to be seen as torn 'between two cultures': it is in fact the "between" which they feel to be their home (see e.g. Biber, *Zeitschrift der zweiten Generation*). Others, such as film maker Muzaffer Hasaltay, say:

"The second generation of immigration, of guestworkers' children ... I am of course

reflecting the second generation, because I come from that background as well, I have addressed many topics: family, language, being between societies, being misunderstood, being excluded, or feeling excluded." (M. Hasaltay, *Making Of Der Freund*, December 2007).

A transnational context is often relevant for them:

Ra. came in 1994, when he was 12 years old, from Karachi. He lives with his parents and younger brother and sisters. He says he feels like a Pakistani, "in our culture", "for us", "me with a different culture", "I am divided", "I will never be accepted as an Austrian." (Interview 2003).

The Viennese park adolescents of whatever background actively participate in their families' lives. Their political attitudes and opinions, certain views and values, can be consistent with those expressed in their families, or different from them, but usually will be a new conglomerate.

Some groups who feel attracted to neo-national views will usually be with peers sharing these views ("closed" groups). Park adolescents discuss political matters openly in their peer groups where the others are of the same opinion, but conceal some of their political views from their families. Closed groups keep their more radical views from their families, while members of open groups – who, as mentioned above, often face a lack of parental understanding when it comes to friendships – try not to infuriate their parents and relatives by expressing their "open" views at home too often.

Groups of young adults with Anatolian background who feel close to neo-national groups (like the Grey Wolves) are at times interested in the Ottoman Empire as the largest Turkish-ruled entity to-date. Other, open groups, will be interested in the Ottoman Empire due to its multi-ethnicity.

Among decidedly neo-Muslim youngsters, I often found that both religious knowledge and practice were lacking: differentiations between *shia* and *sunni*, or other 'classical' divisions in Islam are not especially important to the kids, and some are largely innocent of them; many do not go to the Mosque.

Younger teenagers who come in conflict with the law are concerned about understanding Austrian law and mores. Ethics are frequently discussed among them and with youth workers. Sometimes the Quran's proscriptions, the numerous interpretations of the Prophet Muhammad's life (typical of Sunni groups), and Wahhabi rules (cutting off thieves' hands) are considered in contrast to the Austrian legal system.

Families of former Yugoslavian background have been affected by war, of course. The same is true for refugees who come to the parks from several other nations. Chechnya, Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan are the main countries of origin of young, unaccompanied, undocumented refugees<sup>83</sup>.

Information on homelands and world politics is sought from media, and of course mainly from the internet, and shared among groups in coffee shops, private gatherings, and on park benches. From Austrian as well as from the increasing multitude of minority print and mass media, however, usually the more trivial are chosen.

The adolescents' experiences "back home" are likely to shape their opinions and give them new insights into political and social matters. The following chapter is based on the park kids' thoughts about their families' homelands.

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<sup>83</sup> See also the statistics of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM).

#### C.II.4.5. Young Migrants' Experiences in their Places of Origin

In the office with Ka. We talk about his summer in Prilep in FYROM from which he has just returned. There is usually one certain day in July, when all of a sudden all the groups from Katzenpark are gone: they travel to Prilep, where they go to the disco *Medusa*, just as in Vienna they attend the *Jedinstvo* and the *Nachtwerk* (which is said to belong to Milosevic's son). However, Ka. is back, and upon my asking about his relatives – how do they live, is there enough food, do they have land to farm on? – Ka. starts slowly, reluctantly, and finally, with a sneer, half-ashamed, he says: "I don't know, the people there ... they're not like we are, they do not have ... they do not have any culture." (Conversation in 2005).

A frequently heard remark from adolescents who have spent the summer in a town or village in their homeland is, "The people there have no culture". It seems that the kids see their relatives as "backward." This is especially true for the former Yugoslavian countries, where the ongoing economic circumstances leave many living in poverty and deprivation.

Many of the park youths were born in Austria, or came here as very small children. Trips to the home countries depend on the family's economic circumstances, upon the political circumstances in the country, and upon the family's changing attitudes towards their homelands. Thus very rarely is the whole family able to go. Sometimes one parent takes the younger children. Sometimes adolescents go on their own. In other cases, the relatives in the homelands do not want the adolescents to come. Or, the adolescents have no interest in the home families who they find boring or backwards, and who in turn tend to criticize them.

Some parents build houses back home and try to establish a transnational business. This sometimes involves the family's adolescents, who will then travel back and forth, with occasional longer stays abroad.

Some adolescents, especially if they failed to find a job in Vienna, have remigrated. But often after some time their relatives' initially friendly attitudes toward them change, and they reject the new arrivals, who do not fit into the village or neighborhood.

Some families simply wish to visit tourist sites, especially those in Turkey:

Ke. came to Vienna at age 2 or 3. His last visit to Turkey had been the year before, and it was beautiful. But he says, „Ich hab mich wie ein Fremder gefühlt“ (“I felt like a stranger”). He feels that his home is Vienna rather than Turkey. (Interview 2005).

Sometimes, especially when visiting tourist sites, the holidaying adolescents feel “like a stranger, like a tourist”. They experience their status as rich foreign Westerners and European guests who are distinctively different from the “indigenous” people working in the tourist industry businesses. This is a position very antithetical to that they have in Vienna, where they are regarded as poor and economically stressed, aliens from an impoverished country, and are underprivileged and often discriminated against.

One common experience the adolescents have when visiting “back home” is the language barrier. Because they are learning German in school, their use of their mother tongue, especially writing it, are rusty. They often have an accent to which their homeland family sometimes reacts negatively, thinking them to be crude and difficult. Interaction in Vienna with many different people from their countries of origin might also have changed their speech, and they are not well understood in their home village. Sometimes they are mocked due to their “affected” language.

Sf. is sometimes ill with the flu in winter. When he was in Sivas (Turkey), he got ill because of the "different water and air" ("anderes Wasser und Luft"). (Interview 2005).

Adolescents who do go "back" for holidays often find themselves confronted with negative experiences which do not fit into their preconceived notion of what their family's country of origin is like. For example, their parents often are enthusiastic about "the fresh water and air in the village": but the parents' recollections can sometimes be nostalgic glorifications.

To conclude, adolescents' experiences in their home lands are often predominantly negative, and not easy to digest. While these must also be seen as connected with their coming of age – when everything is put to new scrutiny and looked at with a new approach –, the quick processes of economic change also account for their difficulties. On the other hand, the former homelands can become closer due to a variety of reasons, especially transnational business relations of their families, cheaper travel fares, and increased use of virtual communication.

In the final chapter of the ethnography, a few data on park adolescents in schools are presented.

### **C.II.5. Park Kids at School**

School is obligatory in Austria for kids up to 15 years of age. Whether a school is "good" or "bad" in terms of the education it provides, depends largely on the headmaster and the teachers. Teachers in obligatory schools (those free of charge) have to bear all the city's "scourges" (to use Southall's term).



Cs.: „Ja, und dann hab ich die Schule gewechselt für die vierte Klasse, und dort war ein Lehrer, der hat mir geholfen. Nur wegen ihm hab ich gelernt, noch ein halbes Jahr. Dann hab ich den Hauptschulabschluss gehabt.“ (“Yes, and then I changed school, to attend the 4th grade, and there was a teacher, he helped me. I studied only because of him, for half a year. And so I completed my finals.”) (Conversation in 2009).

This is not a unique story: many kids who managed to finish school gave the credit to one particular teacher who took a liking to them, supported them, and, if necessary, gave them a second chance. Thus success in school often may depend upon one teacher and his or her special dedication to a particular student – often during the teacher’s free time. Sh., an 11 year-old girl from a refugee background, told me,

„Meine Lehrerin hilft mir immer. Sie hat mir gezeigt, wie man zeichnet, und mir Farben geschenkt. Und sie singt auch mit mir. Sie hat mir Unterricht gegeben. Ich will Menschenrechtsanwältin werden.“ (“My teacher always helps me. She showed me how to draw, and gave me colors. And she sings with me. She taught me everything. I want to become a Human Rights Attorney.”) (Conversation, summer 2007).

Teachers who give pupils support and guidance beyond regular teaching hours at school are going above and beyond the call of duty, of course. However, stories like these remind us that successful schooling should not depend upon whether one student is liked and supported by a particular teacher.

As was mentioned above, girls interested in pursuing higher education avoid the parks, where they feel their intellectual aspirations are not supported. Nor sometimes are they supported by their parents who might even oppose further education for them. The girls often find themselves in

arguments with their parents and former peers trying to defend their educational goals:

After years without hearing from her, we meet Mü. again. She tells us, happily, that she just passed her Matura! We are extremely impressed; she had to fight for this against her family, who did not want her to attend school that long. Now she wants to become a medical doctor. But first, in the summer, she must work. Her mother lives in the Netherlands and is divorced from Mü.'s father who, with his new wife, treats her and her brother badly. The brother, Km., is a park boy proper, who finished special elementary school only after some difficulties (summer 2007).

The number of park-based adolescents in higher education has been very small. Most go to general high school, or to special supporting pedagogic centers (where up to 100 percent have non-German speaking parents). But many stop going to school altogether at an early age. To leave school at 15 does not necessarily mean to have *completed* school. Some leave after the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of Hauptschule, having attended both grades twice. Many have “*nicht beurteilt*” (mostly because of poor attendance) in their school records, or “*nicht genügend*”.

The deferred gratification pattern which is necessary for higher education is not often possible in poorer population groups. Families are dependent on their adolescents' contribution to family income, and want their children to enter the labor market as soon as possible. Moreover, low-skilled or unskilled parents and relatives are not acquainted with higher and academic education, and they cannot or will not support their children with privacy and space for homework and the money necessary to continue schooling. The language skills (writing and reading) and mathematics which are especially needed to find work, are least likely to be mastered by children and youth from poor backgrounds, including majority children

whose language skills often are no better and sometimes worse than their immigrant classmates’.

Parks can be recreational places for meeting after school. But parks can also be places where one is *instead* of school, the result of truancy or temporary expulsion from school. Because school, as Albert Cohen has stated, evokes feelings of exclusion and the fear of failure to meet standards, the alternative of the free park life and group autonomy of the park groups looks that much more attractive to their members, whose interaction with other social areas – including school itself – thus decreases.

There is also the desire to avoid the notice and attention of teachers, parents, and police. The Wiener Prater and the Böhmisches Prater are good places to do this, and to make new contacts with other groups, make money from games, to meet girls or get into fights.

Thus, “bad boys” expelled from school head into common urban spaces and expand their knowledge on “bad boy” pastimes.

## **D. Results, Discussion, Conclusions**

### **Parks as Arena**

In a metropolitan context such as Vienna, parks may be perceived in terms of Victor Turner's concept of "arena".

Adolescents feel that parks and cages are where they are free to live their own lives and engage in sports activities, meetings, discussions, and other group-based pastimes as they see fit. As a marked difference to childhood, these activities are increasingly self-determined and less restricted by adults and institutions. Adolescents thus claim 'their parks', and their right to live as they like. Parks are, especially at night, almost free of adult control. Rules of park use are made up by the relevant groups themselves (if not always democratically). Escape and evading (from police, parents, youth institutions etc.) is easy in the park. Parks are good places for a wide variety of experiences which could be termed fragmented self-initiations, and can become a youth's first contact zone with prostitution, violence, incipient criminality and youth gang formation, and illegal activities.

Park life goes on: while older "parkers" are still around, at least in their minds, children have grown up and followed in their footsteps. New groups come to Vienna claiming space, adding their own histories to the oral chronicles of the parks and cages. The stories of people and their experience of living on society's margins are a collective memory shared by park kids. Throughout one district, and often far beyond, youth know each other.

The parks influence park youths' position in their other spatial and social contexts and in wider society. Parks are therefore also symbolic of exclusion. As part of public, communal space, parks are devalued as

against private and privileged spaces. While parks become a retreat for groups, they are at the same time a public stage: used by adolescents for their interests, while co-existing with other groups and users in conflict, compromise, and consensus.

This excluded park sphere forms an anti-space at the periphery, in liminality, to use Turner's concept. This liminality and anti-structure is where *communitas* is happening – egalitarian, face-to-face, direct, spontaneous and free – as positioned vis à vis *structure* or *societas*, which is shaped by formal social bonds, dividing, marked by obligations, law, and constraint (Turner 1994:49).

Parks as *communitas*-places are where new ideas, ideals, styles are created, and simultaneously are arenas where the actual struggles in society are going on, symbolically, and also where “the chips are down” (1994:134). Parks are arenas for struggles and fights among the groups but also with and within society at-large. It is from the margins that societies can open up, because it is there that power relations, structures of exclusion, and unjust conditions become manifest; these are symbolized and contested in the “arena” of the parks. The very existence of parks as marginalized public space, and of park kids as marginalized urban groups, point to antagonisms in the political fields at large.

The parks as arenas are an integral albeit peripheral part of society, and neither set apart from nor independent of Vienna. Hannerz has argued how the larger society determines the ghetto, and while excluding it both spatially and symbolically, nevertheless makes use of it. The same is true for the parks. Parks in space and youth in time are in liminality, containing creativity; parks as arenas contain the struggle. Keeping the channels open between among and across society is necessary. It is not enough to see parks as self-sufficient creative places. Parks as arenas are most of all the sites of a struggle for recognition as part of the whole.

I shall now address the original research questions of this study by summarizing my findings.

## **Groups**

Groups, formed in the neighborhood or through kinship during childhood, often persist far into adulthood. For many, they remain the most important social network. All adolescents in parks are with one or the other group. The peer groups, the friendships, and the often long-lasting relationships show a definite insisting on social life, on participation in larger groups of like-minded people.

Kids in the park are boys and girls who make use of the parks to meet and to play. Many of them are boys for whom soccer is important. Girls either leave their neighborhood parks with growing age, being denied park space by boys and by conventional restrictions; they also often leave if they enter higher education. Other older girls might enter a park's life as a leisure time activity, following new friends, but also when looking for a retreat from home.

The considerable differences among parks concerning girls' attendance ususally are connected to the other groups frequenting a particular park, rather than being related with its equipment and gender-specific structures. Park boys sometimes think of their own parks as 'bad' and do not want their sisters, girlfriends, or cousins to be there.

I classify park "residents" – that is, those who use the park regularly - into "open" and "closed" groups. Open groups expand their radius of action into common urban space, where they meet new people and have new experiences. Closed groups share an in-group world view, and tend

towards neo-nationalist outlooks and “bad” behavior. Violence marks incipient gangs who often have members from mixed backgrounds.

These ideal models of “open” and “closed” groups are not mutually exclusive categories; they are rather models of attitude trends which shift and change, sometimes remarkably fast. Fusion and fission processes are often due to such attitudes and differing world views. The type of a group a youth belongs to determines his or her further movements in the neighborhoods and the common urban spaces. In more or less stable groups, they enter the consumer world. Closed groups are bound to be excluded from these realms, to which they react violently.

The peer group, thus, may be an emotional and intellectual resource and retreat, but can also become an obstacle for more participation in society. However, both open and closed groups’ options for economic participation and higher education are more than sparse.

A. Southall believed that “gangs decrease with employment”. The corollary of this is that gangs *increase* with *unemployment*. Although I observed only incipient gangs, there is no reason to think gangs proper will *not* form, and will probably also include girls.

### **Interaction with Majority Viennese Society**

Schools offer more than education and access to knowledge; there are also pupils’ parliaments, democracy workshops, excursions. Schools are communication bridges where information on society at-large is offered. And conversely, society at-large is influenced through schools, as the pupils’ life circumstances and experiences, their opinions, and their newly-formed approaches are transported out via teachers and their interactions into other spheres of society. Attending school is a way of speaking in society.

The school careers of many park kids are not unbroken. But even if they do well, the school-to-work transition is often ruptured by the increasingly difficult integration into the “flexible” labor market, which hits those in parks most. Alternatives to the official job market become more important: these include careers in sports and in the music and entertainment business.

Work is often connected with bitter experiences for park kids. Sucked in through the “revolving door” into work or its surrogates (funded training), they often find themselves involved with bosses, co-workers and colleagues who are not very supportive. When they are fired – which usually occurs sooner or later – they can fall back into their groups, but must fictionalize “failure into success”, as those on Liebow’s and Hannerz’ streetcorners did. These – and other – similarities between ghetto streetcorners and Viennese park benches might point to an increasing economic and social exclusion of park kids, and to emergent racialization among juveniles in Central Europe.

All jobs of park kids are purely working-class. Barriers to education are many and high; only few kids make it into higher education. Those who do will leave the parks behind.

Few park kids of any background have contact with Viennese middle and upper class groups. Both Hannerz and Liebow remarked almost identically about the Washington D.C. ghetto neighborhoods, that they were “within walking distance of the White House”<sup>84</sup>. Park kids are likely to be ignorant of Viennese social structures and cultural institutions. Nobody among the

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<sup>84</sup> “The New Deal Carry-out shop is on a corner in downtown Washington, D.C. It would be within walking distance of the White House, the Smithsonian Institution, and other major public buildings of the nation’s capital, if anyone cared to walk there, but no one ever does.” (Liebow 2003:10). - “When I was in the Winston Street neighborhood, within walking distance of the White House ...” (Hannerz 2004:211).



Viennese park kids would go to the Opera; and most don't even know where it is<sup>85</sup>.

Park kids on the job front are dealing mainly, if not exclusively, with working-class people, often also from immigrant backgrounds, also if in family-run and entertainment businesses, and also if in jail. The parents of some park youth are from middle class background in their homelands – but they have rarely managed to maintain that status in Vienna. Viennese middle class youth with immigrant background will most likely be oriented towards higher education, and not come to the park.

Some park kids – usually from incipient gangs – have early encounters with the law through juvenile delinquency. Thanks to the welfare system in Austria, these adolescents can be sure of getting at least some money, and support through education and job training programs. Gang formation is thus still largely held at bay.

Park adolescents drug uses reflect their critical attitude towards Austrian mainstream; they almost ignore alcohol, be it due to Muslim background, be it due to a general disapproval which is also shared by (majority) HipHoppers, and majority cannabis smokers. Through the latter, park kids come into contact with majority people who obviously hold alternative views on society and their own position in it, being criminalized as users.

Integration, being part of the whole, does not mean that everybody must necessarily participate in the social conventions and consumption habits of middle and upper class Viennese. But it does mean recognition of the economic, social, and cultural contributions also of park kids, and these include their demonstrations – however inexpert, multivocal, or speechless – of injustice and marginalization.

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<sup>85</sup> No control-group data from other population groups!

## **The Background of Immigration**

Kids in parks come from many backgrounds. Most share an immigration background, which results in a basic solidarity, a basic understanding of each other's experiences in growing up: racism, "blaming the victims", language- and other barriers to education.

The ways the adolescents view Vienna and their or their parents' former homelands show the following variations<sup>86</sup>:

- Some kids feel Vienna to be their home, where they wish to participate in urban life (these adolescents frequent the parks only rarely).
- Others find Vienna to be their home because there is, unfortunately, no other. But they lack prospects and opportunities here, so they must make some sort of accommodation with being here.
- Others find themselves between two cultures. They try out both options, but often find that neither works; the "between" has become home.
- A fourth group tries to make their Viennese neighborhood – a relatively safe place for them – into "back home" by staying in homeland-type surroundings (coffeehouse, work in the family shop, closed park group).
- And a fifth group wants to make "back home" – to which they might eventually re-migrate – into Vienna, or what they know of Vienna. They are bound to run into trouble as people "back home" reject them and their attitudes, which are regarded as alien, arrogant, and provoking.

All young people in Vienna have grown up in circumstances inseparably linked to the history of labor migration to Vienna. Park youth scenes are part of society's struggle to open up. As with the Caribbean immigrants on

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<sup>86</sup> Many adolescents, of course, will go through changing views and shift between these variations.

the *Empire Windrush* in Great Britain, ‘Gastarbajteri’<sup>87</sup>, have come to the front to insist on having their participation in society recognized and their contributions to Austria’s development acknowledged.

The migration backgrounds of park kids do not say much about their feelings, attitudes, values; but the specific linkage of their parents’ or grandparents’ homelands with Austria – the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic, the ‘Balkan’ countries, the Sovjet Union ... – point to a former uneven relationship, to an imperial past. From that angle, parks could symbolize dependent territories.

### **Urban Youth – Youth in Cities**

Youth in cities are vulnerable groups upon which the antagonistic tendencies of urbanism pull and push the most. Adolescents depend, for their development towards maturity, on favorable surroundings. This includes the possibilities for open interactions and communication with as many different people as possible. To form and strengthen connections with the wider society, they must be able to see, meet, and observe other people, and have the opportunity for organizing their own new world. Their social, socio-economic, political, and cultural achievements and their enjoying the emotions and activities of their coming of age must be seen as part of the whole.

Bodily experiences and the “body-fication” of youth styles mark the present-day coming of age. Inter-ethnicity in growing up and differentiation of background have been integral parts of park-based urban youth in Vienna. The city as a whole, because of its common urban spaces populated by the young, has become the arena for this.

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<sup>87</sup> Exhibition title, Wien Museum, and publication (Gürses, H. and Kogoj, C., eds) (2004).

Cities as concentrated spheres of human potentialities may offer all these opportunities. But counteracting forces are at work: the separation and segregation of young people into special locations; denial of access to economic activity including consumption and production; under-and over-demand in school, education, and jobs; and the reduction of safe, open and accessible spaces, options, and opportunities as fields for creating and establishing their new ways of life also in contact with adults.

Experiences with a developing body, changing hormone interplay, sexuality, and their new position in society can neither be separated from the urban conditions, nor from the subject-based mind-body developments. Being young and poor in the *oecumenopolis* (Southall 2000:4<sup>88</sup>) shape the young people's experiences during puberty and growing up – a period especially important due to the expansion of mind.

The human potentiality to self-reflect, to transfer, to copy, to assimilate, to create and to integrate is at its best in the city, with its concentration of people. There are two main, but in no way exclusive, ways of dealing with these conditions, to act in these conditions: an open way – urban, post-racist, striving for inter-group solidarity, and togetherness. And a closed way, adhering to the still dominating global approaches of racism, inner-group solidarity, and gang mentality.

### **Global Urban Society**

Youth in cities who belong to the working-class population in the global urban society offer their young bodies as cheap labor in the service sector, in the entertainment business, and in the informal sector. They are increasingly left without substantial participation in production processes,

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<sup>88</sup> Southall speaks of *ecumenopolis* in an earlier analysis (1983:19).

but are recruited for consumption. I notice the collapsing of anything worth calling cultural or social 'moratorium youth'.

Feelings of exclusion and marginalization are part of park kids' urban experiences in growing up. Bodily practices and styles express and reflect these experiences. All these manifestations are intertwined with global society both ways: taking up the mass-mediated offers, styles, and ideas, and sending pictures back through virtual channels, successful culture production, and by being seen and 'scene'.

Park kids are connected to global processes through transnationality, global popular music, TV and internet uses, consumer life styles, and body images. The "transnational stretch" that Vienna's park adolescents experience follows global economic integration and is a further liminal status of "betwixt and between". The international connections coming about by migration movements (Sassen 1995) are newly formed and experienced by adolescents' visits – even connected with economic options – to their parents' back home countries. Some follow their families' and relatives' transnational flows further abroad.

World politics enter their spheres – often with post-racial or post-ethnic approaches, but also with neo-national and sometimes neo-Muslim views<sup>89</sup>. "Neo-Muslim" means here the new forms of being (made) Muslim "under different global and transnational conditions" (Gingrich and Banks 2006:2). According to Victor Turner, revivalist movements "originate in periods when societies are in liminal transition" (1994:53). These transitory global conditions also include 9/11. The park kids' Neo-Muslim views have developed largely in reaction to world politics and the stigmatization caused by them.

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<sup>89</sup> Not how German writer Feridun Zaimoglu uses the term when speaking of 'black virgins', middle-class girls in Germany. This phenomenon is not to be observed in Viennese parks.

Dwelling in virtual realities is a further connection to world politics through information on war, music, and through (violent) computer games and their designs. The internet is used also as an interactive medium, “sending pictures back”.

Through music, park kids have absorbed an image of ‘ghetto’, of Brooklyn and Los Angeles, sharing Michael Jackson’s plea that “they don’t care about us”. Looking at park kids’ most precious musical interests, an implicit resistance is entailed in them. Whether these experiences are addressed and conveyed by Arabesk; or through the definite insisting on important musical traditions as in Balkan sounds; the open and partially turned-around aggressiveness of HipHop; or the global mixed R’nB, R’n’Besk, Bhangra: they all integrate youths’ feelings about society. Black music, especially HipHop, has become a model for expressing experiences and for striving at being recognized as partaking in and shaping the forces of history.

Viennese parks can hardly be seen as ghettos, not in a spatial meaning. But parks could in fact be seen as an *imagined* ghetto, as spatial representations of a concept which travels via media. Parks can become an adolescents’ ghetto, containing experiences of precarity, oppression, exclusion, and poverty, but also with poor-on-poor crime, and immobility both in social and spatial terms.

## Park Kids' Ethnography in Light of Academic Literature

The literature I use centers on youth in urban conditions of poverty – apart from the works of M. Mead (1928) and Schlegel/Barry (1991) which are windows into societies *before* global urbanism.

Watson and the authors in his anthology (1979) have researched immigrant groups on both ends of the migration chain. Adolescents are not explicitly studied, but the researchers nevertheless provided quite helpful ideas about problems “between two cultures”. Park youth, especially the open groups, act in line with contributions in Watson’s volume how younger generations feel more solidarity with those in the same minority position of exclusion than with former home-society’s localities (the Indian subcontinent, in the Ballards’ study, and the common ground of resisting youth movements, as in Nancy Foner’s remark on Jamaican younger generations).

Thrasher, Cohen and Southall’s views on gangs have been amply presented. Lack of work and no access to legally earned money might increasingly stimulate gang processes. Gang formation processes are discussed in Thrasher’s (1963) and Cohen’s (1967) books. While park groups do, in my reading, not belong to the gang category, the involved group structures are nevertheless accurately observed and viable for Vienna park groups as well. Formed during early childhood on a neighborhood base, many of the groups persist until adulthood. The gang *mentality* observed by Thrasher (which is also at work in dominant social groups) is found in some groups, while in others an inter-group solidarity is experienced and enacted. These two group attitudes are underlying my models of open and closed groups.

Cohen explains adolescents’ preference for autonomous group life as a reaction to the frustrations brought about by society’s norms and demands

which the boys (in his example) cannot meet. Their counter-dependent styles are society's values turned upside down, which involves creative ideas. In Vienna's parks, exclusion and frustration are strongly felt. Members of open groups are more likely to find the reasons for exclusion in racism, nationalism and also in specific persons' attitudes; closed groups tend to explanations based on essentialized notions of ethnicity and religion.

Both Thrasher and Cohen mention parents' inability to understand their children's social needs. This is true for park groups, albeit not in a general way. Differentiation of migrant families brought with it a multitude of attitudes which are connected to a family's economic standing. Middle-class entrepreneurs will find other explanations and also solutions than poor low- and unskilled wage-dependent groups.

Looking at London under the circumstances of post-colonialism, a recessing economy, and declining social democracy, Gilroy (2000) took us on a tour through sub-cultural activism of global impact: punk rock and reggae together against racism. Music does have an important position for adolescents in Vienna; music production has been showed to hold job opportunities for kids, often connected to their families. While music styles are preferred which contain resisting and alternative values, definite political actionism as mentioned by Gilroy is very rarely the case among park youth.

Helena Wulff (1995) observed girls in South London to be in the forefront of ethnic mixture and post-racial thinking. In Vienna, girls in pairs and groups are spatially and socially mobile at a younger age, meet more people, and are less dominated by group structures than park boys, who are affiliated with a certain park or cage group. These girls might get a positive impulse for their post-ethnic attitude through that. Considering *why* girls must stray further (denied the necessary spaces for play and



interaction in their surroundings), is less positive. And surely the insisting on “ethnic mixture” is not very important for closed girl groups.

Baumann’s study (1996) shows how the “dominant discourse” of *culture* and *community*, which introduces categories, segregation, and discrimination, takes hold of population groups and determines their views of ‘themselves’ and of ‘others’ as ‘ethnic’ perceptions of each other. Baumann finds that adolescents came to more fluid categories through new ways of integrating their experiences. – Viennese park adolescents are subjected to, and stigmatized and essentialized by, the dominant discourse. Open or closed groups deal differently with these mediated exclusion mechanisms.

Gingrich and Banks (2006), Sassen (1995), and Ivekovic (2008) point to hidden structures which still guide modern European societies as countries cling to their imperial and colonial past, while Rotenberg (1995) maintained that the urban landscape mirrors people’s views of social relationships. The parks, then, appear as realms of a dependent “alien” work force.

## **Park Kids’ Ethnography in Social and Cultural Anthropology**

My material interpreted through the literature above, and the migration studies I draw on, lead to a larger picture.

The varied immigration patterns when people moved to cities and metropolitan areas from colonial realms, from former colonies, and from the internal and external countryside: to Chicago from the rural Black South and from Catholic Europe; to Great Britain from Jamaica; and in France, immigration groups from North Africa are probably the most

important. But these *distinct* patterns lead to *similar* conditions for youths: exclusion, barriers to education, denied access to more rewarding economic spheres; the youths' contact only with controlling figures, and their nebulous view of the surrounding majority society.

In Victor Turner's view, these conditions could be seen as produced by "structure" which "holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their actions" (Turner 1994:47). Against this separating structure, the anti-structure is in *communitas*, which "is most evident in 'liminality'" (Turner 1994:47). Accordingly, youth *formations* are also similar: sticking together, doing things together, hanging out together, making music, expressing their experiences, and bringing their struggles into scope.

Park kids insisting on being together in their groups try to live this *communitas* both as a "bond uniting ... people over and above any formal or social bonds" (Turner 1994:45), and as creativity, in dialogue, conflict, or struggle with "structure" or "*societas*". The park kids are: "betwixt and between" spatially, socially, symbolically; through the transitory phase of youth; between cultures; between the need to consume and the inability to do so (Bourdieu 2001:3), but also on the forefront of those "who live and fight for eros and against death" (Marcuse in Brinkhorst/Koch:93).

There are, in any city and metropolitan area, those most deprived youths who act and re-act with and against their stigmata; some get tangled in self-fulfilling prophecies and might be in groups categorized as 'closed' in this study; and might be 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know'<sup>90</sup>.

The anthropological study of youth in cities shows how neither of these groups can be explained by their 'cultural', 'ethnic', 'racial' etc.

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<sup>90</sup> ... as Phillips/Phillips remark on the (white) Teddy Boys in England's 1950s (1999:161).

backgrounds. It is rather the urban surroundings which lead to these formations under conditions of precarity and exclusion; those from undocumented and labor migration streams are usually involved in the most deprived groupings. It is urban anthropology which has shown that cities developed from a new economic productivity (Ansari/Nas 1983), and were, from their very beginning, “the central arena on which the fateful drama of human wealth and inequality has been played” (Southall 2000:14). My present study is one more contribution to this drama.

In social and cultural anthropology, adolescence as a human universal should be studied more often, including long-term studies, involvement in the field, working with given groups, and following them to their worlds. It is the strength of social and cultural anthropology to see, and to make visible, humankind as a whole through time and space.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The findings of my study are not entirely new as such. Yet they provide through a Vienna case study an in-depth research of exclusion and marginalization, of self-fulfilling prophecies, and of ghetto-ization in the metropolis.

Poverty in an urban context is a phenomenon in each present-day city and metropolis, in the global oecumenopolis. People in the lowest income and status groups finding ever someone even weaker to oppress (the girls); crossing almost imperceptible borders to delinquency – no wonder: boredom, under-demand, not knowing what to do with oneself, reading and writing not being an option, the old story.

Frederic Thrasher knew and exposed the gang nature of society people: “They are all Greeks, and the rest must suffer.” Access to resources is

controlled and kept in the gang. Women are excluded. Boredom, neglect and jet-set-inspired beauty OPs: these are not really working-class youth syndromes. Other features include ignorance towards others and their needs; lacking of interest in other people; exclusion of others due to 'wrong' religion, language, color; prejudices, myths, horrors and fears of other groups; in case of doubt, or preemptively: the use of violence. Lacking concern for the whole, squandering of resources, living for today, no thought for tomorrow ...The list goes on and on, and it becomes clear how the park kids mirror society at-large. They reflect it from the outside, from the bottom.

All adolescent park groups came into existence as an urban phenomenon in global conditions. Society's development comes from its margins, from those demanding access, rights, and participation. The population groups who render the prevalent beliefs invalid, who point to injustice and exclusion, also show new prospects.

In that, humankind can ever count on our young who are speaking loud and clear. Listening is always worth while. This is the life blood and also the importance of an anthropology of youth. In exposing both the persisting values and the utopian visions, youth anthropology contributes to the all-time question: Who are we? Who could we be?

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Back on Stage, Einrichtungen der Mobilen Jugendarbeit  
 (Grundlagen, Fotos, Texte, Projektberichte, ...)  
<http://www.mobilejugendarbeit.at>

Verein Wiener Jugendzentren  
<http://www.wienerjugendzentren.at>

Verein Wiener Sozialprojekte  
 (Drogenarbeit; mit Ganslwirt, Streetwork, CheckIt, ...)  
<http://www.vws.or.at>

## Appendix (1) Bionic B-Boys History

Durch die Videos vieler Breakdance Crews z.B. die Flying Steps und dem Breakdance-Workshop den Rico von ‚Resurrection‘ leitete sind wir vom Breakdance Fieber gepackt worden. Als die ersten in der damaligen Gruppe ‚Breakas in da Arena‘ Marco und Nisa(Sonic) anfangen zu breaken haben dann auch Sumal (Twister), Kemal und die anderen angefangen. Egal wo, wie, und wann wir haben immer trainiert. Wir haben in vielen Jugendzentren, Basketballplätzen, egal wo wir haben überall trainiert wo wir nur konnten. In der Zwischenzeit gingen Marco und Nisa(Sonic) von der Gruppe weg. Aber trotzdem haben sie sich oft getroffen und zusammen trainiert. In dem Jahr wo Nisa(Sonic) und Marco zu ihrer neuen Crew ‚Soulsonic Scills‘ gingen hat Marco in der Zwischenzeit aufgegeben. Sumal (Twister) und Kemal gründeten dann ihre eigene Crew namens ‚Magnetic B-Boys‘. Durch einen alten Freund von uns namens Srdjan (Mikey) beschlossen wir eine Gruppe zu gründen, und diese Crew ist bis heute geblieben. ‚Bionic B-Boys‘ ist entstanden. Nach ein Paar Monaten kam Nisa(Sonic) zu uns. In der Zwischenzeit kam auch Marco(Turbo) von der damaligen Crew ‚Soulsonic Scills‘ zu uns.

## Bionic B-Boys 4ever

(We got infected with break dance fever by the videos of many breakdance crews, such as the Flying Steps and also by the breakdance workshop led by Rico from ‚Resurrection‘. When the ‚Breakas in da Arena‘ started to break(dance), Sumal (Twister), Kemal, and the others started as well. Wherever, however, whenever we always practiced. We practiced in many youth centers, on basketball courts, wherever we could. In the meantime, Marco and Nisa (Sonic) left the group. But they still met often and practiced together. In the year that Nisa (Sonic) and Marco came to their new crew ‚Soulsonic Scills‘, Marco gave up. Sumal (Twister) and Kemal then founded their own crew named ‚Magnetic B-Boys‘. We decided with an old friend, Srdjan (Mikey), to found a group, and this crew still exists, the ‚Bionic B-Boys‘. After some months, Nisa (Sonic) joined us. In the meantime Marco (Turbo) from the former crew ‚Soulsonic Scills‘ joined us.)

## Appendix (2) Questionnaire *Gesundheitsverhalten von Jugendlichen*

### 1. Leben

M W Alter Größe Gewicht verh allein FreundIn, mehrere?  
Kinder? Familienleben, wohnen wie? Geboren wo? Staatsbürgerschaft?  
Arbeit, arbeitslos, mit Geld, woher, Geld wie viel ca.? Familie woher?

### 2. Alltag

Ein normaler Tag für Dich?  
Ein spezieller Tag für Dich?  
Wochenende – unter der Woche?

### 3. Lebensgeschichte

Wie ist Dein bisheriges Leben verlaufen – Kurzfassung: warum bist Du wo Du bist?

### 4. Lebensgefühl

Wie fühlst du dich meistens – heute – jetzt gerade – gestern – beim Aufstehen? Wann stehst du auf meistens?  
Wann fühlst du dich gut: immer nie meistens selten nur wenn ich ...

### 5. Input

Wovon lebst Du – was führst Du Deinem Körper zu?  
Essen, wer gibt es Dir, mit wem isst Du? Kannst Du kochen, tust Du es? Kochst Du mit Freunden oder so?  
Tschick, Drogengebrauch, Alk und andere Drogen (wie viel, wann, Anlässe, allein oder mit Freunden)?

### 6. Körpergefühl

Bist du mit deinem Körper zufrieden oder was möchtest du anders haben?  
Dünner dicker kleiner grösser Haut Haare ...  
Wie glaubst du dass dein Körper arbeitet, so ungefähr?  
Hast du irgendwelche Krankheiten?  
Glaubst du, dass dir was fehlt eventuell?

### 7. Wunschverhalten

Was würde dir gut tun? (Mehr Sport/weniger Drogen weniger/mehr essen/gesünder leben - was verstehst du darunter?)  
Was in deinem Leben schätzst du als gesund / ungesund ein? Was läuft falsch, woran scheitert das ‚gesünder Leben‘?

### 8. Illness Behavior

Hast du manchmal ...?  
Hattest du schon mal ...?  
Was machst du, wenn du ... hast?  
Was machtest du, als du ... hattest?  
Zahnweh, Bauchweh, Unfall / Verletzung, Kopfweh, Erkältung, Fieber, Ausschlag  
Operationen  
Warst du schon mal beim Arzt, warum, wann? Gehst du regelmässig zum Arzt (zu welchem, wie oft?)  
Spital? Warst du schon, wann, warum, wie lange, in welchem (Ambulanz, stationär)?  
Was hast du für Erfahrungen mit Ärzten, Ärztinnen, selbst oder Deine Familie, Deine Freunde?

### 9. Unterschied Frauen – Männer? Welche sind gesünder? Was glaubst Du?

### 10. Geld

Wofür würdest Du Geld ausgeben für Deinen Körper? Wenn Du jede Menge Geld hättest dafür?

## Abstract (English)

### “We’re Doing It in the Park!” Park Kids in Vienna: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Urban Youth

The aim of this study is to integrate an ethnographic study of park-based adolescents in Vienna into a larger anthropology of youth in the “global metropolis”. Data come from a decade of participant observation among young people in Vienna’s parks. Their experiences of growing up are shaped by these specific surroundings, and incorporated by the young people into new outlooks on life.

In the first part, after defining puberty, adolescence, youth, and adulthood, I introduce approaches to coming of age in cities; from the history of social and cultural anthropology (M. Mead, A. Schlegel/H. Barry) to concepts of urban anthropology (J. Watson’s *Between Two Cultures*, A. Southall’s *The City in Time and Space*). Youth in Chicago and London is reviewed in studies of the Chicago School from the 1920’s, and through the works of P. Gilroy, H. Wulff’s, and G. Baumann. I also draw from E. Liebow’s and U. Hannerz’ 1960s ghetto studies and aspects of Victor Turner’s work, and consider approaches from Viennese scholars.

The ethnographic section contains parks as “arena”; and park kids in their spatial and social contexts.

In the “Arena”, background information on Vienna and neighborhood parks leads on to the adolescents in parks in their group formations and discusses health, body styles, food, drugs, and music, and older adolescents’ situation.

In “Contexts”, I follow the park kids through their neighborhoods and the common urban areas, and observe their experiences at work, at school and in their families, as well as their internet and TV uses, transnational experiences, and political attitudes.

The empirical results are summarized and discussed in the contexts of my research questions, and the academic background studies and literature.





## Abstract (deutsch)

## „We're Doing It in the Park!“ Park Kids in Vienna: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Urban Youth

Diese Studie stellt den Versuch dar, die mehr als zehnjährige ethnographische Untersuchung von jugendlichen Parknutzern und –nutzerinnen in einen grösseren Zusammenhang von Jugend in der “globalen Metropole” einzuordnen. Die Erfahrungen des Heranwachsens werden von ihrer spezifischen Umgebung geformt, und in neue Sichtweisen eingeordnet.

Im ersten Teil, zu Forschungsansätzen, werden Pubertät, Adoleszenz, Jugend, und Erwachsensein definiert. Dann führe ich einige Ansätze zum Aufwachsen in Städten an. Dabei beginne ich mit Werken von M. Mead, und A. Schlegel/H. Barry aus der Geschichte der Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie. Konzepte der Urban Anthropology (J. Watson, *Between Two Cultures* und A. Southall, *The City in Time and Space*) führen weiter zu Jugendstudien der Chicago School of Sociology, sowie zu den Arbeiten von P. Gilroy, H. Wulff und G. Baumann, die Jugend in London zum Thema haben. Die Ghetto-Studien von E. Liebow und U. Hannerz bilden einen weiteren Hintergrund meiner Arbeit, sowie auch Konzepte von V. Turner. Ansätze gegenwärtiger Forscherinnen und Forscher in Wien werden vorgestellt.

Im ethnographische Hauptteil der Arbeit werden die Park-Jugendlichen in der “Arena” und in ihren “Spatial and Social Contexts” gezeigt.

In “Arena” leitet ein Überblick zu Wien und den Nachbarschaftsparks zu den Jugendlichen, die die Parks in ihren speziellen Gruppen als Hauptaufenthaltsorte nutzen. Aspekte von Gesundheit und Ernährung, von Körperstilen, Drogen und Musik werden erläutert, und die Situation einiger älterer Jugendlicher beschrieben.

In “Contexts” begleite ich die Jugendlichen durch ihre Nachbarschaften und in die weiteren Stadträume, und beschreibe ihre Erfahrungen am Arbeitsplatz, in den Familien und in der Schule. Bedeutung von Internet und Fernsehen werden untersucht, und Daten zu transnationalen Erfahrungen und politischen Einstellungen vorgestellt.

Die empirischen Ergebnisse werden im Kontext meiner in der Einleitung gestellten Forschungsfragen im abschließenden Teil zusammengefasst und mit der verwendeten akademischen Literatur diskutiert.

## Lebenslauf

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**Akademische Ausbildung:**

1986-1994 Studium der Ethnologie an der Universität Wien

Diplomarbeit „Kurds' migration from Central Anatolia via Ankara to Vienna“ (Feldforschung in Anatolien und Wien 1992-3)

**Postgraduale Ausbildung:**

3-6/1995 Hochschullehrgang Kulturjournalismus und kulturelle Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Universität Salzburg

3-6/1996 Research Student am University College London, Dept. of Social Anthropology

3/2005 Beginn Doktoratsstudium an der Universität Wien

**Wissenschaftliche Einbindung:**

Mitglied der IUAES *Commission on Urban Anthropology* seit 1992. Gründungsmitglied der IUAES *Commission on Children, Childhood, and Youth* seit 2000.

**Wissenschaftliche Konferenzen:**

**- Workshops:**

2003: Lucca/Firenze, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) Inter-Congress (Workshop: „Urban Migrants Between Two Cultures“)

2004: Kolkata, IUAES Congress (Workshop: „Riots, Protest and Resistance“)

**- präsentierte Papers:**

2000: Beijing, IUAES Inter-Congress („Vienna Youth, Growing Up in a Multi-Ethnic City“, publ. 2003, 2007)

2003: Firenze, IUAES Inter-Congress („Young Urban Migrants Between Two Cultures“, publ. 2009)

2004: Kolkata, IUAES Inter-Congress („Anthropology of Protest – some considerations“); 2005: Istanbul, The International Forum for Social Sciences and Health (IFSSH) World-Congress („Health Issues Among Viennese Marginalised Youth“)

2005: Tehran, IUAES Inter-Congress Pilgrimage Cities and The Cities of Central Asia („Mariazzell: Holy Mother, Pray for Us Sinners. Catholic pilgrimage in Austria“, publ. 2009)

8/2008: Ljubljana, European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) („Vienna Street Heroes: Black Music in Parks“)

9/2009 Leiden, The Urban Poor: Mobilities and Mobilizations („Urban Youth in Poverty: Physical Immobility and Virtual Reality“)

**- Teilnahme:**

2005: Pardubice, Racism's Many Faces

2007: Tirana, Jubilee Conference Comm. on Urban Anthropology: European Corridors

**Sonstige wiss. Tätigkeiten:**

2006–2009: Arbeit zu Dokumentarfilmemacher Farhad Varahram, Iran/Österreich („Iranian Travelogues“, in *Anthropology of the Middle East* 4/2009, New York–Oxford: Berghahn)

11/2008: Youth and Resistance. Vortrag am Univ. Department of Anthropology, Ljubljana

1/2010: Kunst in Städten. Überlegungen zu Kunstbiennalen. Lecture Performance mit M. Halsaltay und O. Serdar, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Wien

**Berufliche Tätigkeit in der Jugendarbeit:**

1993-1995: Betreuerin *Interkulturelle Lernbetreuung* Wien (Projekt der Volkshochschulen), Hauptschule Leipzigerplatz, 1200

3/1997-11/2007: Aufbau der Einrichtung und Streetworkerin (mobile Jugendarbeiterin) bei *Back on Stage 5*, Verein Wiener Jugendzentren. 2001 bis 2007 Teamleitung

**Künstlerische Tätigkeiten:**

Titelbild *Verkehren der Geschlechter* (Kossek, Langer, Seiser, Hg.), 1989

Produktion *Menschen in Städten* (seit 2007, Wiener Kabelkanal Okto); Videoarbeiten (Kurzfilme, Musikvideos, Dokumentationen)

Erfahrungen in Musik- und Jugendszenen (London, New York, Kingston, Berlin, Wien)